



TO

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS

WILLIAM FREDERIC,

DUKE OF GLOUCESTER AND EDINBURGH,

EARL OF CONNAUGHT,

CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE,  
&c.

*In Testimony of the Respect due to a Prince who  
has so nobly distinguished himself, by his benevolent  
and patriotic Endeavours to effect*

**The Abolition of the African Slave-trade,**

**THE FOLLOWING PAPERS**

*of a late respectable Planter who, by a truly wise  
and humane*

**Mitigation of the West Indian Slavery,**  
*has shown how, in a case confessedly difficult, to al-  
leviate the Sufferings, and improve the whole Con-  
dition of an oppressed People; on the Principles  
of the ancient Laws of England; with perfect  
Safety to the Public; and, as he experienced, with  
very great Advantage to private Property, are  
(with Permission) most humbly inscribed, by*

*His Royal Highness's*

*Faithful and Obedient Servant,*

**WILLIAM DICKSON.**





## INTRODUCTION.

THE appearance of a volume, almost entirely new, on a business unaccountably thought by many to be settled, will no doubt surprise those who have never been accustomed to distinguish the *African Slave-trade* from the *West Indian Slavery*. These subjects are indeed so closely connected, that it is easier for the adversaries of the Abolition to confound them, than for its friends to keep them separate. But, in themselves, they are, and always have been distinct;—so very distinct, that the wise and memorable Act of Parliament which, in March 1807, declared the one to be unlawful, left the other wholly untouched.

\* Mr Gaisford, p. 12, calls the Abolition of the African Slave-trade — "little more than a half measure."

N B. The titles of these and the other works shortly quoted below, are inserted in the Ind 2, under the respective surnames of their authors.

Governors ; and in the ~~judicial~~ proceedings, in three of the islands (which need not be named) where the African Slave-trade has been long at a low ebb. The facts alluded to, though but a mere specimen of the West Indian Slavery, clearly show that they flowed from a source *inherent in that Slavery itself*. An additional proof is, that, notwithstanding the Abolition of the African Slave-trade, the low price of produce, and the exorbitant price of Slaves (all strong motives for œconomizing their lives) the deaths among the Slaves of another island, in 1810, exceeded the births by *above ten thousand*\*. No cause of any extraordinary mortality is alleged ; but that surplus of deaths appears to have happened in the common course of business.—In short, the good effects of abolishing the African branch of the trade have not, in any considerable degree, fulfilled the hopes of the good People of this country ; few of whom are aware of the real sources, and the deep inveteracy of the evils which they, in unison with the Government, humanely wish to be remedied.

This is precisely what Mr. Steele predicted, from dear bought experience, on his own plantations, for thirty years, followed by *above ten years* particular study of the subject. See pp. 3 and 17, below. Accordingly, the facts just alluded to, had no connection whatever with the African Slave-trade ; but were the nearly unimixed effects of the system whose pernicious tendency Mr. Steele had previously pointed out to his less reflecting neighbours. In short, the evils he describes, though more or less aggravated by the trade, were not caused by it. The Slave system still is what it *was*, and *will* be, as long as its own radical, though happily not incurable evils are allowed to exist. Those who make the comparison, will be at a loss to find *any* difference, all things considered, between the West Indian Slavery of the seventeenth century, and that of the nine-

\* See Mathison's Notices, p. 18. The loss to the island, by those deaths, could not be less than 700,000*l.* sterl. in 12 months!

teenth. If the Slaves *then* suffered much from the riotous living of the Proprietors (see p. 427 below) they probably suffer more *now* from their more general non-residence. If their mortality has decreased, it must be remembered that the islands have become far more healthful, by being better cleared and cultivated, and that medical practice has been exceedingly improved\*. On the whole, we may safely affirm that the general treatment of the Slaves, in the old Sugar islands, has not received any material improvement for a century and a half†. The new islands have but copied the old; with this difference, that the hardships inseparable from the clearing of fresh lands have, in *all* cases, deplorably aggravated the mortality. Whether or not the late and present state of things promises any considerable and permanent improvement, will appear from the following papers.

Every rational and temperate view of this great subject, is bounded by two most dangerous extremes;—*Immediate Emancipation*, and perpetual, *unlimited*, unmitigated *Slavery*.

For immediate emancipation, neither the Slaves nor their Superiors are, in any respect, prepared. The former have been debased by suffering, and the latter spoiled by exercising an unbounded private despotism. Many of the Slaves, like cage-birds fed, however indifferently, by their Owners, have lost the power of providing, in a fair way, for themselves. The Slaves are too little qualified for the government of law, and their Owners and Managers to govern *by* law. The persons of the Slaves, and both the persons and property of their Owners, would want more protection from mutual violence, than the British Govern-

\* Dr. Trapbam's Discourse of the State of Health in Jamaica, printed 1679, is quite in the Sangrado style. Bark and Madeira wine, and well-timed good living, have no place in his prescriptions!

† Compare Ligon's History of Barbadoes, in 1653, and Tryon's Advice to Gentlemen Planters, &c. in 1684, with the recent performances quoted in the note, p. v above.

ment could afford to such distant and unhealthful provinces, if the chains of Slavery should be suddenly removed. But we need not dwell on this head; since, to use the words of a most intelligent correspondent, it is on all hands agreed, that "the immediate emancipation of the West Indian Slaves, would be the essence of madness."

Neither would it be wise or safe, in the present state of the West Indies, to continue, without some considerable modifications, a system which despoils the great Body of the People of *all* their natural rights, and exposes them to every kind of wrong, without a possibility of redress!! For, as the testimony of the enslaved Negroes, Mulattoes, &c. is not taken against White persons, they are, in effect, Slaves not only to their Owners and Managers, but to any and every miscreant, of European birth or descent, who may make them the butt of their ungoverned passions, often infuriated by spirituous liquors!! At the best, the moral code of the West Indies has no chapter on *Duty to Slaves*; nor the practice any rule but the mere will and caprice of the Master, or his Deputies, to which the Slaves are as entirely subjected as their horses. Laws, customs, opinions, maxims, and prejudices are all against the Slaves; and even the Holy Scriptures absurdly and impiously quoted as the charter of oppression!! Nature is forced out of her course by this preposterous system; and every social tie superseded by a rigour calculated to excite, and often actually exciting, the fell vengeance of despair\*! To thinking men, this brief representation, long ago established by evidence, will be quite decisive of the *danger* of the pre-

\* After all the positive evidence on this subject, I little expected to hear, as I lately did, the stale pretext of the Owner's interest urged as a sufficient protection to the Slave. If men always followed their true interests, there would be no such things as folly and crime in the world. But what interest have white vagrants, or even the white underlings on plantations, in the Slaves whom they sorely harass and oppress? Or how is even a Proprietor's interest to be of any use to people among whom he does not reside, and whom perhaps he never saw?—to say nothing here of the *opposite* interests of Deputies, or the inefficiency of the protecting Slave-laws enacted in the islands, since the treatment of the Slaves became a subject of public and parliamentary attention.

sent practice; without adding a word about the ancient servile wars; or the bloody insurrections\* in the modern Slave-colonies; or the late horrible catastrophe of St. Domingo, and the unprecedented and perilous state of things thence resulting.

If then, the extremes of immediate emancipation, and perpetual, unlimited, absolute Slavery, are both allowed to be awfully dangerous, the safe and adviseable measure must lie between them; and may be comprised in this fundamental question: *How may the acknowledged evils of the West Indian Slavery be MITIGATED, without injury to the White Colonists, the Negro Slaves, or any other party concerned?*

On this great moral problem, I have reflected and conversed, more or less, ever since my arrival in Barbadoes in the year 1772. It was forced on me by daily occurrences, exciting a temporary indignation, which generally subsided, when my mind was vacant, into the calm consideration of the problem just mentioned. But I had little success; and I do not know that any other person, except *one*, has, to this hour, been more fortunate. Some ideas, no doubt, occurred to me, which might perhaps be useful. But I never could devise, or learn from intelligent and humane eye-witnesses, and much less from books, the general solution required. *Incidit in Scyllam, cupiens vitare Charybdim.* To an ordinary mind, this problem appeared to offer nothing but a choice of difficulties; some of which, as they occurred to me, are inserted at p. 500 below. So great did those difficulties appear, that when, after returning to this country, I embarked actively in the Abolition cause, I never ventured to suggest, in private conversation, and

\* In the year 1790 or 1791, when defending the Abolition Committee of London against the false and ridiculous charge of fomenting the troubles in St. Domingo, I enumerated, in print, *fifteen* insurrections, some of them horribly bloody, which had taken place in the different European Slave colonies, in the W. Indies, during the *thirty-two* years almost immediately preceding the agitation of the Abolition question;—besides others which must have escaped my search. On this subject, see Long, vol. 2. p. 443.

far less to put into print, any specific plan for the Mitigation proposed. I had, indeed, almost given up the case as desperate, when I met with the Answers to Governor Parry's *Queries*\*, a long time after they had been printed. Those Answers suggested to me so much more than they expressed, that I wrote to the Hon. Joshua Steele, whom I believed to be their author, for farther information. Mr. Steele's answer showed me that a plan far superior to that which I had been seeking, was actually reduced to practice by himself, on his own sugar estates. I say far superior; for, though all thinking men, from the days of Pliny and Columella down to the present time, have been convinced that it would be cheaper to *pay* Slaves than to *force* their labour; yet it never entered into my head that a planter could be found to declare war against vulgar prejudice, and to risk the experiment, and the bitter opposition it would excite, on a scale which would justify any useful, practical conclusion. The additional experience of about two years (see p. 2 below) enabled Mr. Steele to honour me with information far more decisive and satisfactory than he could furnish to the Governor. Indeed his letter to me, taken in connection with his other writings on our subject, here collected, clearly proves, that the happiness of Owners and their Slaves may not only be made compatible, but may be both most materially promoted, by measures within the power of every proprietor who possesses the means of carrying on a Sugar plantation.

Mr. Steele's first principles are the plain ones of treating the Slaves as human creatures; moving them to action by the hope of reward, as well as the fear of punishment; giving them, *out of their own labour*, wages and land sufficient to afford them the plainest necessities; and protecting them against the capricious violence too often of ignorant, unthinking, or unprincipled, and perhaps drunken men and boys, invested with arbitrary power, as their ma-

\* Inserted below, at the 143d and following pages.

nagers and "drivers." His plan is founded in nature, and has nothing in it of rash innovation, or modern *optimisme* of any kind. It does not hurry forward a new order of things; and recommends no fine projects, or ticklish experiments; but, by a few safe and easy steps, and a few simple applications of English law, opens the way for the gradual introduction of a better system. Whether or not that system would ultimately terminate in an approach to English liberty, is a question which concerns not the present generation; or, if it did, the change would be so gradual as not to be perceived. But the question is really irrelevant to the case in hand; which is not a speculation about political privileges, but a practical question about the natural wants of human creatures. If the *humblest and coarsest necessities of life*, the *protection of law*, and the *assistance of labouring cattle* could be secured to the Slaves, they would soon become generally contented and trust-worthy;—would become an impregnable fortress, instead of a source of everlasting anxiety, weakness and expence, both of life and treasure, to the islands they cultivate, and still more to the mother country\*.

These and other grand objects would be far more effectually and safely promoted by Mr. Steele's few and simple regulations which, *if but rendered legal for proprietors who might choose to adopt them*, would gradually slide into practice, and almost execute themselves, than by any more complex, and apparently more complete system which cannot be executed at all. Such was the **NATIONAL Code Noir**

\* Mr. Stephen, in his strong and "New Reasons for abolishing the Slave-trade," p. 8, says that the *W. Indies* probably cost us more *Money* from 1702 to 1807, than all our continental subsidies and military operations; and certainly more *Men* than we lost by sickness and the sword, in every other service! For he states, from authentic returns, that, from 1796 to 1802, we lost by sickness, in the Windward Islands, and, as he apprehends, exclusive of St. Domingo and Jamaica, 17,173 out of 19,676, soldiers employed!! Now, if the Negroes were properly treated, the Windward Islands might turn out perhaps double this number of men, who would not die faster than the people of this country. In short, they would most effectually defend the islands, and at little or no expence to the mother country! See p. 304 below.



of the French,—to say nothing of our own **PROVINCIAL Black Codes**,—specific, solemn, imperative, plausible and —impracticable, even by their vigorous government. After sleeping in dust and cobwebs for above a century, after being laughed at in the West Indies, and applauded by the theorists of Europe, all that time, it made its exit in the butcheries and burnings of St. Domingo; not a single article of it having ever been put in force\* in that colony!

Mr. Steele's plan, however, may, no doubt, receive some improvements, which his great age obliged him to decline. He speaks very favourably of the plough (p. 163 below), but does not appear to have used it; nor do I find any specific provision for moral and religious instruction. But this last omission is the direct consequence of the opinion expressed or implied in several parts of his papers, namely, that bad laws and examples prevent the Negroes from embracing Christianity†. Or he might have thought that the equity and moral tendency of his plan of governing his Slaves, would gradually qualify and dispose them to receive more specific instruction.

Still our author's plan is perfect, as far as it goes. *To advance above three hundred debased Field Negroes, who*

\* So we are assured by Wimpffen, p. 55. See also, Long, vol. 2. p. 441 and vol. 3. p. 996; Gasford, p. 38, Edwards's Hist. of St. Domingo, p. 43.—“*L'Etat de 1685*, says M. D'uberteau, t. 1. p. 111; The edict of 1685 [or *Code Noir*] regulates the power of Masters, and establishes a kind of proportion between faults and punishments. But this does not prevent Slaves from perishing daily under whips and chains; nor from being knocked on the head, hanged and burnt, without formality. These various cruelties always go unpunished.” &c.

† See pp. 75, 84, 136, 159 below. The Rev. Dr. Coke, in the Extracts from his Journals, p. 182, says that “the Negroes of Barbadoes, for some reason which he cannot explain, are much less prepared for the reception of genuine religion than those of any other island.” But the worthy minister unknowingly suggests, in the same page, one very probable reason of this peculiarity, when he says, that Barbadoes has more White people than the great island of Jamaica; many of them “very poor, and some supported by the parish,”—and not a few, he might have added, by robbing the Negroes, or inciting them to rob their Owners, &c. &c. Thus the Negroes of Barbadoes, seeing more of, and suffering more from the immoralities of that sect of *Christians* than those of any other island, it is no wonder that they are more indifferent about a religion which, to them, produces such bitter fruits. But Dr. Coke was not long enough in the island to make this observation.

*had never before moved without the whip, to a state nearly resembling that of contented, honest and industrious Servants; and, after paying them for their labour, to TRIPLE, in a few years, the annual neat clearance of his estates* (see p. 157 below)—these, I say, were great achievements for an aged man, in an untried field of improvement, pre-occupied by inveterate vulgar prejudice. He has indeed accomplished all that was really doubtful or difficult in the undertaking; and perhaps all that is, at present, desirable either for Owner or Slave. For he has ascertained as a fact, what was before only known to the learned as a theory, and to practical men as a paradox,—*That the paying of Slaves for their labour, does actually produce a very great profit to their Owners.*

After the publication of Mr. Steele's papers, it may be hoped that we shall hear no more of the alleged absurdity of describing evils without proposing remedies. "We have no need, says the Baron Wimpffen \*, of those officious gentlemen to tell us that Slavery is a hateful thing. What would they say to the Esculapius who presided over their health, if, in an overflowing of the bile, he should prescribe nothing but a furious invective against the malady which consumed them?"—They would, no doubt, say that the invective was misplaced. But if the patient had not only induced, but was daily aggravating his disorder by intemperance, an honest and spirited Esculapius would be apt to tell him in plain English, that the remedy lay with himself, and that nothing could do him good, while he persisted in his bad habits.—A quack would know better than to talk thus. Though as ignorant as Mr. Long's Apozem †, he would probably discuss the case in "a leash of hard words got by rote;" would wonder at the strange

\* Voyage to St. Domingo, p. 50. But, on the whole, this author is very favourable to the Abolition.

† Mr. Long, in the 6th chap. of his 3d book, gives a curious "History of a Jamaica quack;" which, however, he declares, does not generally apply to the faculty in that island.

and shows, what one would think plain enough, That human beings cannot stand the drudgery of horses, even in a cold (far less in a hot) climate, and though well paid, fed, clothed, and lodged, and effectually protected by law. The coal-bearers, in the *East* of Scotland, enjoyed all these advantages for ages before they were *emancipated*, in 1775, from being, practically, “accounted *adscripti glebæ* \*;” which, however, would be a great *privilege* to the ~~enslaved~~ Negroes ! Yet, from their insupportable labour, the deaths among those coal-bearers, in some years, *still* exceed the births. This is owing to the “very bad and disgraceful old custom” of employing human beings, five days in the week, in an oppressive drudgery which, in the *West* of Scotland, and probably throughout all England, is executed by horses and machinery †.—So it is, and would be with the Field Slaves on sugar plantations. They may be well treated in every *other* particular ; but, in point of labour, never *can* be effectually relieved, without the help of labouring cattle, and proper implements of husbandry.

Of Mr. Steele’s papers, in a literary view, the reader will observe that he has been more intent on the matter than the language ; showing, however, occasionally, that he had the decent ornaments of style at his command.—The additional papers I have written as well as I could ; though not so well as I wished. But, in odd fragments of time, snatched

\* These are the words of my author. But Mr. Advocate Maconochie, now Lord Meadowbank, at p. 29, of his admirable “ Information for Joseph Knight, a native of Africa,” Edinburgh 1775, proves that “ coalliers are not born *adscripti*.”—A coallier, he adds, acquires property and transmits it ; and has been found entitled to be a councillor of a borough ; and, with equal reason, to be elected a member of parliament. See more, note, p. 506 below.

† See A General View of the Coal-trade of Scotland, by Rob. Bald, Civil Engineer, at Alloa, Edin. 1808, pp. 73, 138. At p. 16, the author says, that, in the year 1715, common labourers, on the Forth had 6*d.* sterl. per day, and coalliers 14*d.* ; and at p. 26, that, in 1808, the former had 2*s.* and the latter 4*s.* 6*d.* A coal proprietor, on the Forth, a gentleman of family and fortune, far from being offended at Mr. Bald for reprobating, as he does in several parts of his book, a “disgraceful custom,” older by ages than any of the W. Indian abuses, mentioned to me, with gratitude and respect, Mr. B.’s exertions, both as a man and a skilful engineer, to relieve the poor coal-bearers.

from other pursuits, and very often from sleep, justice could not be done to a subject which would require the whole time and labour of a man in the vigour of life, possessing adequate talents, acquirements, and external convenience. Although my personal knowledge of the subject, inspires me with confidence in the facts adduced; yet in this, as in other instances, I have given the principal statements the support of evidence and historical information. In my opinion, no writer should object to give his authorities for important facts; nor do I see the use of evidence if it is not to be referred to. No doubt, the numerous quotations have been laborious to me; but they will be satisfactory to readers who are not so much accustomed to reason from general principles as a highly respectable gentleman of the law was, who once said to me: "I shall not read a word of the evidence. It is confessed that the power of Masters over their Slaves is completely arbitrary. That is enough for me; for, from what I know of human nature, I am sure that all the abuses which, I understand, are described in the evidence, must inevitably follow."—The repetitions, in the Second Part, were owing to interruption, sometimes for many months together; and, in some measure, to design. Of the more important articles, I have given "here a little and there a little;" lest they should escape those who may read but a part of the work, or those who are apt to "ride post through a book, and are liable to run by objects, without discovering all their importance\*."—"You have remembered those passages," said a celebrated French writer, to one who took notice of his repetitions, "It was for this end that I repeated them so often. I did right. Without this, you would have forgotten them."

From the causes hinted at, some things are found in the notes which should have been in the text, and *vice versâ*. Some things also, are more enlarged on than others of equal importance. But, on the whole, I have aimed at brevity;

\* See our author, Mr. Steele's *Prosodia Rationalis*, 2d edit. p. 207.

and, it is hoped, not without success. Persons, at least, who tolerated the double and treble quartos of certain other West Indian writers, will not surely complain of a single octavo, on topics compared with which the principal contents of those quartos, interesting as they are, shrink into utter insignificance. If the subjects were treated in a manner at all suitable to their dignity and importance, this would indeed be a work of which no man would need to be ashamed.

But I fear that intelligent readers will observe, in *my* part of the work, greater blemishes than those just mentioned. I can already see some such myself. For example, at p. 342, I inadvertently ask, Whether even the royal confirmation can legalize colonial statutes repugnant to the laws of England? But surely no "solemn argument" can be necessary to determine that the royal prerogative extends not so far. See pp. 54, 57. No doubt, there are other faults which might, and ought to have been avoided. But the greatest faults of all, in the eyes of some men, will be that of Mr. Steele in writing, and of his editor in laying before the British public the papers in the First Part. It is not pretended that these papers are immaculate. But some errors may be only apparent, and others, for aught I know, intentional. Mr. Locke, we are told, "would sometimes divert himself with setting traps to catch unwary cavillers." I do not say that Mr. Steele has designedly set man-traps and spring-guns in his premises. But, in my opinion, the *homines stolidi et ad depugnandum parati*, should take care that, in attacking him, they do not *induere sese in stimulos latentes*\*.

### *Some particulars respecting Mr. Steele.*

As every Abolitionist who may peruse Mr. Steele's papers, will naturally wish to know something about their author, I would gladly close these observations with a brief account

\* See p. 82, of *Geometry no Friend to Infidelity*, addressed to the *Analyst* (Bp. Berkeley) by *Philethes Cantabrigiensis*, said to have been Dr. Jurin.

of his life, if I possessed the materials. But I can only mention the few imperfect hints which were current respecting him, in Barbadoes; for, in this country, I have not been so fortunate as to meet with any of his friends; most of whom, indeed, must now be numbered with the dead. In Barbadoes, he was one busy man, and I was another. His residence was 12 or 14 miles from Bridgetown, where I lived. I believe he did not often stay in town longer than his business absolutely required; so that I seldom met with him, except accidentally at the "store" of a common friend, with whom he had frequent dealings; and there he was more of the man of business than the philosopher. How I became known to him, is mentioned, p. 311 below.

Of his early history, I know nothing more than that he was said to have been originally from Ireland; but had lived many years in London, in habits of intimacy with persons of rank and character. When he arrived in Barbadoes, early in the year 1780, his reputed age was fourscore; but he was still an able man, above the middle stature, a little corpulent, and, on the whole, respectable, and even venerable in his appearance. His manner of living appeared to be regular and temperate, but not too abstemious; and he said he had taken a dose of bark daily, for twelve years.

His zeal in promoting useful and practicable improvements, abundantly appears in the following sheets. In Barbadoes, he only continued the course which he had long pursued in this country. He was there considered as one of the founders of the London Society of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce; but it was probably that of Dublin; for the London Society was formed in the year 1754, and his name, as a member of the latter, does not appear in the books till 1756. He was elected Vice President of the London Society, in March 1779; and as such, his subscription was paid down to Lady-day 1782, two years after his arrival in Barbadoes; where he had formed, in 1781, a subordinate society of the same name, and for the same objects; and

which, taken collectively, was a member of that of London. He had the credit of having introduced, or much promoted, several new manufactures in England, particularly the Marseilles quilting; and he was indefatigable in his endeavours to employ the numerous, idle, White Poor of Barbadoes, in working up their native fibrous productions\*, such as cotton of several species or varieties, silk-grass, cabbage-tree leaves, plantain stalks, &c. These materials may be easily procured in any quantity, and may be formed into every article usually made of hemp and flax, from the largest ropes to the finest thread; though none of them had been brought into use, except the common cotton, of which a few good stout hose, gloves, night-caps, hammocks†, and counterpanes had long been manufactured. But, by Mr. Steele's humane patronage, and that of the Society which he formed, spinning ginnies were introduced, good calicoes, dimities, &c. were made; and Mr. Steele himself appeared at the Government House, in a handsome coat, woven like kersimer, of what he called vegetable silk, being the down of the Ipecacuanha, or Indian root, a common weed in Barbadoes. In short, next to the reformation of the Slave-system, the employment of the destitute White Poor of that island, appears to have been his grand aim in founding the Barbadoes Society of Arts; and there can be no doubt that had he arrived there twenty or thirty years earlier, so as to

\* To those who would restrain the colonists from "making even a hob-nail for a horse-shoe," it may be observed, that (owing to the introduction of Slaves, and their being bred to all the mechanical arts formerly exercised by the very numerous white population) Barbadoes contains many more idle White People than any other British colony. When this was explained to the prime minister, Lord Shelburne, he attentively read the printed Minutes of the Barbadoes Society of Arts, and was so much pleased with them, that he desired to become a member. At first, Mr. Steele was made President; but afterwards, when the Society had gained more strength, the Governor became President, and Mr. Steele Vice President.

† Many country families in Barbadoes are provided with a number of white cotton hammocks of the texture of counterpanes, neatly fringed, and made large enough to fold over the body, and serve as bed-clothes, in that hot country. Every apartment has one or more pairs of cleats to hang them on; so that, if a party too numerous for the standing beds, happen to be kept late, by rain, &c. they can be accommodated for the night, in a few minutes.

have had time to overcome old prejudices, that whole community, White as well as Black, would now have reason to bless his memory. His perseverance, affability, and extensive information qualified him well for such undertakings; and seemed to render his company acceptable to thinking men of his own respectable class; though there were others who talked of "Old Steele's projects," as men in other countries, who have seen little, observed less, and thought least of all, are apt to talk of every new attempt, however promising or valuable.

Mr. Steele's conversation was highly entertaining and instructive. Though generally or habitually grave himself, he could "set the table in a roar" with his playful stories and arch remarks. I remember admiring very much his coolness, when one of his favourite local opinions was attacked, with somewhat of unbecoming vivacity, by an inferior to him in years, and every thing else but the little matter in debate. His uncommon command of temper must have been often severely tried, by the provoking bigotry of his white servants to the bad practices which he wished to eradicate. But an early occurrence, said to have taken place on his principal plantation, was well calculated to show them that he was determined to be master of his own property. On his first arrival, he dined much abroad; but, having completed his domestic arrangements, he naturally wished to entertain his friends in his turn; and, among other preparations, told his principal black servant to get a goat killed—"Da Manager's, Massa, said the man.—Well, take one of the fattest of the sheep.—Dem de Manager's.—A pig.—Da Manager's, all de same.—A turkey and some fowls.—Dem ebery one Manager's, good Massa.—Go, call the Manager.—The Manager came.—I find, Sir, said Mr. Steele, that all the small stock, as well as a number of the Negroes and cattle are yours\* ; so you had better  
get

\* Some Managers put a *liberal* construction on the general permission to "raise, kill, and eat." On one of the plantations of a certain constant Absentee,



get them all together, and take yourself and them away; and then I shall know what I can call my own." Probably the Manager little expected his aged employer to come over from England, and call him to such an account.

Our author's acquaintance with men of learning was understood to be extensive. Sir John Pringle and Dr. Franklin were particularly mentioned among his friends. From his intimacy with the latter, more perhaps than from his own conversation (for I never heard him talk of politics or religion) he was suspected, by some persons of ostentatious loyalty, to be more friendly to the American cause, than became a good British subject. But the same vile calumny was whispered about Governor HAY himself; and for a more plausible reason; because, forsooth, he was "unwilling to disgrace the King's Commission by granting it to every picaroon who applied for it." These are His Excellency's own words. The truth was, that that faithful, upright, and generous representative of His Majesty, considered all privateering as disgraceful to civilized nations; had no better name for it, in private, than "licensed robbery;" and often wished that Government would prohibit altogether a practice which puts the lives and property even of national enemies, in the power of men too often void of all honour and humanity\*.

Mr. Steele's general knowledge, and his acquaintance with the classics sufficiently appear in the following papers; and, from his conversation, it was gathered that he was competently skilled in mathematics, and physics. In this last department of science, he probably made some very arduous attempts; for he proposed a problem relative to tastes and smells, in which no man but a NEWTON, who

sentee, I have seen above 100 turkeys belonging to the Manager; and was told that he had other stock in proportion; all fed at the Proprietor's expence—and that of his Slaves, who are harassed with picking grass, &c. for the stock, when they should be getting rest and refreshment.

\* Officers of ships of war leave the baggage of their prisoners untouched—Picaroons often strip off their very clothes. Our brave T'ars abhor both Picaroons and Slave-captains.

discovered

discovered the strict analogy between the laws of colours and those of sounds, could hope to succeed. One of his objects, in proposing that problem, was understood to be, to determine accurately the comparative value of sapid and odorous articles of commerce, by taste and smell, as well as by colour, texture, &c. On another refined and difficult subject, however, he communicated original discoveries, in his "Essay towards establishing the Melody and Measure of Speech, to be expressed and perpetuated by peculiar Symbols;" which he published in the year 1775. A second edition, amended and enlarged, appeared in 1779, under the title of "*Prosodia Rationalis*, or An Essay, &c." This work was highly esteemed by those who could judge of its merits; which cannot be duly appreciated by any but masters of the theories of music and prosody. It is dedicated to Sir John Pringle; and Lord Monboddo, and other learned men appear among its eulogists. Mr. Boswell\* mentions it in these words: "Dr. Johnson's mode of speaking was indeed very impressive; and I wish it could be preserved, according to the very ingenious method of Mr. Steele, who has shown how the recitation of Mr. Garrick, and other eminent speakers, might be transmitted to posterity, *in score*." For my own part, the only use I can make of this profound work, is to beg that those readers of the following papers, who may think Mr. Steele's disposition acrimonious, and his style occasionally unpolished, will read such parts of the *Prosodia Rationalis* as they may understand. They will there find a style which, I think, they must acknowledge to be neat, perspicuous and forcible, and entirely free from that appearance of acrimony, which the vexatious subjects of the following sheets have an irresistible tendency to produce in thoughtful men; and especially in one who had suffered so much as Mr. Steele, from the abuse both of power and confidence. No great praise seems to be due to Absentees in general; but I must do them the

\* Life of Johnson, vol. 2. p. 335, fourth edition.

justice to believe (what I have been often told) that one cause of the non-residence of the more reflecting, is that they may escape the truly deplorable scenes *inseparable* from the present mode of carrying on the W. Indian cultivation;—scenes which destroy their own comfort, and injure the tempers and the morals of their children.

I have not met with any body who could tell me exactly when Mr. Steele died; or whether his plan of Negro Government was continued on his plantations. But I suppose that he did not long survive the year 1790; for I wrote to him, after receiving the first of the following papers, to inform him of the state of the Abolition cause, and of my friend Sir JAMES JOHNSTONE's operations with the plough (see p. 286 below) but I never received any answer.

After I had written thus far, and was on the point of giving this my last sheet to the printer, I learned from the newspapers that a law giving validity to the evidence of Free People of Colour against White Persons, had passed in Jamaica,—amidst an *opposition* from those White Persons, which, it is to be feared, will defeat all the efforts of the island legislature to render that law *practically efficient*, or even to preserve it from being repealed. See p. 356 below. But I have not been able to learn that any Jamaica law to that effect, has reached the Secretary of State's Office, this 14th of February 1814: nor does it appear that any such statute as yet exists in Barbadoes, which, after Jamaica, is our most considerable island.

In a late melancholy *instance*, however, already well known to this indignant nation, which began and proceeded in private malice, and (owing to the spirit and prudence of His Excellency Governor ELLIOT, of the Leeward Islands) ended in a *most extraordinary* act of public justice, it appeared that, by a *late* law of the little island of Tortola, the evidence of Free People of Colour is taken against White criminals. It is believed that a similar law hath *lately* been enacted in one or two of the other small islands; but in *what* particular island or islands, few men, if any, in this kingdom, can exactly tell;—so difficult is it for our information

tion to keep pace with the *hurry* (I had almost called it) to improve the *wording* of the Slave-laws, which has been manifested *since* certain measures, on this side of the water, began to be expected. I should rather say suspected; for, at this moment, I do not know that any such measures as those recommended by Mr. Steele, are really intended.

But, whatever may be the present state of the West Indian Codes, the Spirit of the Slave-laws, and the *quod animo* with which some of them have been, or may be improved and *executed*, sufficiently appear from the following papers. *Quid Leges sine Moribus, vane—Proficiunt?* What are Laws good for, without Morals? Were Mr. Steele now alive, I do think he would be wicked enough to ask, as in p. 17 below, “How long will this humour for improvement last?” And the true answer would be: It will last just as long as the humane attention of the British Government and People is kept steadily fixed on the treatment of the Negro race,—and no longer.

The Mitigation, however, of the Slavery of the great Body of the Negro race, the Field Slaves, and not of the comparatively few, and comparatively happy Free People of Colour, is properly the subject both of Mr. Steele’s papers and mine. To talk of mitigating the *Slavery* of *Free* People is, no doubt, a solecism in words; but, here, it is no solecism in fact. For the *only* freedom enjoyed by those *called* Free Negroes and Mulattoes is, or was, and *will be* (if things are left to themselves) a freedom from drudging, in hunger and nakedness, *under the whip*, too often sorely lacerated, loaded with chains, and lodging in the stocks or the dungeon!! With this single exception\* (certainly a most important one) those *Free* People are in effect *Slaves*, if not to individuals, yet to the Whites at large;—to a blind and bigoted multitude, the most atrocious of all tyrants. For, without the power of giving evidence against ill disposed Whites, the Free Negroes, &c. have, in truth, far less protection than the Slaves of spirited and athletic White Owners; who scruple not to put in force the *Lex laculina* (*Anglicè* Club-law) against men of their own complexion, who beat, wound, or rob their Negroes. And, accordingly, those tyrants (when sober) know how to distinguish be-

\* In a general view, it is hardly worth while to notice the few persons of property, of Negro descent, who are occasionally invested, by special acts of assembly, with the privileges of White men; especially in Jamaica.

tween the Slaves of *such* owners, or managers, and those of widows, or orphans, or of weakly, aged or timid men.— If necessary, I could give specific instances of these, as of other, general truths stated in these sheets.

We may venture, however, to hope that the Free People of Colour will derive *some* benefit from the laws which have been, or may be enacted in their favour;—if those laws should be impartially and steadily administered, and not suffered, *as heretofore*, to drop into oblivion, with the transitory emergencies which, in a manner, *forced* them into a reluctant existence.

Of one thing I am as certain as any man can be of a future event, that the generally peaceable, sober, industrious, and even sensible People of the Free Coloured Class in Barbadoes (about 5000 in number, p. 179 below) would thankfully receive, and endeavour to merit any privilege which might be conferred on them. Above six-and-twenty years ago, I publicly declared my good opinion of them, which has been since corroborated by Mr. Steele and General Tottenham, and still more by their own *general good conduct*. See p. 174, 179, 362 below.

It is impossible to admit as an exception from this last general character, the case which, some years ago, came before the Duke of Portland, as Secretary of State, who, for aught that I could discover, most properly concurred with the Governor;—even though the latter was suspected of favouring the Negro race. I happen to know that D..., the Free Mulatto, was reputed an honest man; and that, at the imminent peril of his life,—his *peculiarly precious* life,—he *alone* saved the most valuable and populous quarter of S..... town from instant conflagration! But I do *not* know that S....d, the White man, was capable of so meritorious an action, or that any of his virtues were more than *skin deep*. Yet I will not say that the White man deserved what he got; provided it is granted me that the Mulatto did not deserve what was *intended* for him. There seems to have been no proof that the former was quite innocent, or that the latter (though highly blameable) was capitally guilty. But *Qu.* How would the enemies of the Mulatto have acted, had the White man been in his place? I do humbly apprehend, that no answer which would be intelligible in this, or any other country of equal justice, can be returned to this fair and simple question.

I had

I had added two less equivocal *samples* of the sort of liberties which are sometimes taken by White men with those called Free People of Colour, whose case I have been *unexpectedly* called to touch upon. I had given a sample of the tyrannical reception given, by a Chief Magistrate, to a Free Mulatto imploring protection; and another of a private White man, *qui, aliquibus abhinc annis, quendam manumissum, pice liquida plumulisque obduxit, et per oppidum dictum I——E B——L, in plastro suo, processione turpissima, portavit; non sine plausu, ut vereor, certè sine offensâ ALBORUM. Nonne tales ALBI, talibus gestis, salutem publicam perpetuò periclitantur? Vid. p. 179.* This exhibition took place *since* the Abolition question came before the British Legislature. But I have blotted out one of my samples, and obscured the other, not only because this work is intended to prevent, and not to expose, such occurrences, but because both cases were perfectly trifling compared with some which have *very lately* occurred in other islands, and which, it may be hoped, will come, in due time, before the Public, if not before Parliament.

After being thus obliged to cross a bye corner of the ancient field of battle, I ought to wave all pretensions to technical propriety in what I have occasionally, and almost unavoidably, said about the Slave-laws; especially in the 10th and 11th letters of Part Second. I say almost unavoidably; having long expected that some person competent to the task would treat the Slave-laws in general with the same ability which, I apprehend, Mr. Steele, allowing for his not being a lawyer, has shown in animadverting on those of Barbadoes. The few remarks I have hazarded are those of a man of common sense and reflection; and to *all* such men, the defects, not to say the illegality of those very curious statutes, are but too glaring. I did intend to submit my manuscript to a professional gentleman who resided several years in the W. Indies, and whose knowledge of the subject is understood to be extensive. But, recollecting "the glorious uncertainty of the law" in the islands, where the acts of the assemblies are not regularly printed, I thought it would not be fair to expect a gentleman immersed in business, to search my manuscript for errors which probably would be of little moment; and would be more readily pardoned in me than in him.—W.D.

\* \* To make room for these last *unintended* paragraphs, I have carried to the end of the Appendix, some extracts from the letters of my Abolition correspondents in the W. Indies, which would, otherwise, have been inserted in this Introduction.

\* \* Mr. Steele, like Mr. Long, Mr. Edwards and others, expresses all sums of money in the currency of Jamaica and Barbadoes, of which 140*l.* make 100*l.* sterling. But I have generally annexed the sterling value. It were to be wished that W. Indian writers would always express their money in sterling, which is *universally* understood, instead of the island currencies, which are from 40 to 60 and even 75 per cent. worse than sterling; and which are known only to the comparatively few persons who are concerned in the business of the islands. To all other men, however well informed otherwise, they are a source of perpetual uncertainty and error;—as they were to the sailors in the Slave-ships, who, not knowing the difference between currency and sterling, were often grievously defrauded, by being paid their wages in the W. Indies; instead of this country, where they made their agreements.

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# MITIGATION OF SLAVERY

&c.

## PART FIRST.

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### No. I.

#### LETTER FROM THE HON. JOSHUA STEELE TO THE EDITOR,

EXPLAINING HIS VIEWS AND PROCEEDINGS.

Mr. Steele impartially answers Queries of Government about Slavery—has made the subject his constant study.—Barbadoes Laws repugnant to Laws of England, and hurtful to Proprietors and Slaves.—Nullity of Negro Evidence, fosters Crimes in Whites—by which Mr. S. himself suffers.—Forms Barbadoes Society of Arts, &c. to favour reform of Slave-laws—Attempt quashed, how and why.—Thus disappointed, Philo-Xylon takes up the pen—Tries Reform on his own Estates—Takes Whips from his Negro-drivers—Appoints Rewards—Negro Courts—and Rulers.—Dismisses his chief Overseer—Appoints another—who proves unfaithful :—Finds Rewards operate powerfully on his Slaves—At last gives them Lands and regular Wages, making them Copy-hold Bond Slaves—Simplifies his Plantation Accounts—Establishes Store, or Shop—His Corn not now stolen off the ground, and why.—Slaves become much honester—Divides them into six Gangs—Answers Editor's Queries—Legally, Slaves have no Protection.—Abolition of African Slave-trade would rather help than hurt Barbadoes.—His Copy-holders succeed beyond expectation.—No one helps his Reforms—But some say, if he succeeds, he will deserve a statue.—Prodigious Dominion of Overseers—Parliamentary agitation of Abolition has produced no Lenity to Slaves.—Negroes and Mulattoes can prove nothing but to hang one another

E

—Abolition

—Abolition can do no good, unless Slave Laws are reformed—No respectable Proprietor would oppose such Reform if done in England.—Only necessary to enforce Charters.—Slaves under good Laws, if *Adscripti Glebæ*, would be happy.—Plantations should be made Manors.—Pamphlets in favour of Slavery not worth answering.—Philo-Xylon's Letters do not sell—though but ninety printed.—Mr. S. made Member of Council, and will endeavour to counteract Prejudices.

*Kendal's on the Cliff, Barbadoes,*  
Sept. 30th, 1790.

MR. W. DICKSON.

SIR,

YOUR letter of July 10th (after a long passage in the Quaker) came to my hands about the 19th instant, in which, as you inform me, that “having the honour to be known to some of the first and best friends of the Negroes in England,” and that “they approving of your writing to me on the subject,” it encouraged you, &c. But the respectable character in which I knew you here, eight or ten years past, added to the importance of the subject, concerning which your letter calls upon me for some local information, and for my opinion on some particular points,—required no apology in so good a cause, to a man who hopes never to forget his duty in the cause of humanity.

When I was called upon, about two years ago, by our governor, Mr. Parry, to answer certain queries sent out to him by the ministers at home, (and, as I supposed, to all the other West India governors) in order to collect various and authentic opinions of West India proprietary and resident planters (and not  
of

of their servants) concerning the customary private treatment, as well as the public and legal protection, of Negro slaves in these colonies, I thought it my duty to give the fullest and most impartial answers to every question, as far as my knowledge and experience enabled me; though I suspected my opinions would differ in some points from the opinions of those who take them from their servants, or from those who have been born and bred up under the local prejudices of the colony; I having made that subject, in all its extent (that is, What should be the treatment and government of Slaves in this chartered colony?) my constant study ever since my arrival, in March 1780.

I had suffered so much by the evil and unfaithful conduct of my agents, attornies, and overseers, during thirty years absence, and before I had ever seen my property here, and particularly in the destruction of my Negroes, that, after considering the local laws and customs of the island, it appeared to me evident that the evil could never be effectually cured, till certain local laws of the colony should be repealed, disallowed, or superseded: viz. clause the 3d and 7th of the Barbadoes statute, No. 28\* in Hall's edition, and statute No. 32, clause 19, to be repealed, and some others to be amended. And, in statute No. 148, clause the 8th to be repealed, disallowed, or superseded; all which are directly *repugnant* to the laws of England, and contrary to the conditions enjoined by the charters (the 5th of Cha<sup>s</sup>. I. and the 15th of Cha<sup>s</sup>. II.) whereby the limited powers of legislation were granted to

\* For this and the other clauses here mentioned, see the article marked with this 3d page, in the Appendix.

this colony : that of the 15th of Cha<sup>s</sup>. II. having been granted after Lord Carlisle's resignation of his proprietary grants to the Crown, in which the same restriction is expressly repeated, by granting the power of making laws, *provided such laws are not repugnant, but as near as may be, to the laws of England.* And, from and after this charter, the 15th of Ch<sup>s</sup>. II. the King's writs have ever since run in this island ; whereby it became virtually, in legal consideration, an English county or corporation, with respect to such laws as were then current in England, according to the tenor of said charter.

The two obnoxious clauses in the Barbadoes statute No. 28, are impolitic respecting the common weal of the colony, and unjust respecting the individual proprietor ; clause the 3d, because it is hurtful to the comfort and prosperity of the Negroes ; and to the proprietor, by putting an immediate stop to the cultivation of the land, from whence the labouring Slaves are removed : and, taking the two clauses No. 3 and No. 7 together, if put in execution, they must effectually ruin any sugar plantation, for less than a fourth part of its real value ; and at this time, several sugar plantations lie waste by the operation of this law, executed upon them within a few years past.

Clause the 19th of No. 82, gives so open an encouragement to irascible and illiterate men to commit murder with impunity, that there needs no other reason to account for the continual decrease, than by this unfeeling and unnoticed destruction of the Slaves.

And clause the 8th of No. 148, by disqualifying all Negro evidence, both free and slave, against white  
criminals;

criminals, does most completely cover either murders, felonies, or frauds, if white men are so disposed, who may be entrusted with the indefinite property of their masters, without any probability of legal conviction, or even possibility, though three hundred Black or Mulatto informants might most exactly agree in their evidence of facts, and in all concurrent proofs of time and place, and actual commission of specific frauds or thefts against the White criminal.

I had not been three months on my estates, before I had proofs convincing to myself (and which, by the laws of England, would have been so to a court) of frauds, felonies, and murders, on my three plantations: but here, in this colony, I could only exercise my authority as a proprietor, by dismissing the iniquitous and unfeeling overseers. And then considering with myself how difficult, if not impossible, it would be for a single proprietor to attempt so great a novelty as to bring about an alteration of manners and customs, protected by iniquitous laws\*, and to which manners, customs, and laws, even the independent and educated gentlemen of the country seemed to be so thoroughly, though inconsiderately reconciled, as to imagine them the best possible, and without which, in their estimation, the indocile and intractable ignorance of Negro slaves could not be softened or amended by any human art or contrivance.—I say, as by several conversations, I found this to be the *sensus communis* of the colony, I endeavoured to invite the formation of “*A Society of gentlemen of liberal education, for the encouragement of Arts, &c. in Barbadoes, to promote,*

\* Ungodly custom, grown strong, is kept as a law.”—*Wisdom of Solomon*, xiv. 16.



as far as they could, whatever they should judge would contribute to the advancement of the arts, manufactures, and commerce of this island; and to correspond with the London and Dublin Societies of Arts, and with the Royal Society in London:" in hopes that by such a society, in conferences on patriotic subjects, new ideas and new opinions might, by degrees, soften the national bigotry, if I may so call it, so far as to admit of some discourses on the possibility of amendment in the mode of governing Slaves.

The formation of a society succeeded, and it was established in July 1781; our subjects under consideration became popular; we printed the first part of our minutes in May 1782, and sent several copies to the Lords of the Treasury and Lords of Trade, to the Royal Society, London and Dublin Societies, and to several of our absent members then in England. In page 17 of the printed minutes, there is a paper which was laid before the chair and read, entitled "Considerations on the present state and interest of Barbadoes," &c. which paper was referred to a committee, to report facts on the state of this island, &c. See p. 25. In page 34, there is an address from the society to the House of Assembly, for a new law to encourage the employment of the poor in the several parishes, which act was accordingly passed by the Legislature, and has been lately adopted in the parish of St. John. In p. 47, a paper inscribed "For consideration of the society\*," &c.—in which the subject of the impolitic

\* A copy of this paper follows the present letter. It contains in brief every thing materially interesting to Proprietors and Slaves, as such, which is to be found in the minutes of the Barbadoes Society of Arts, &c.—W. D.

and iniquitous laws of the colony, with some proposed alterations in the Slave-laws, agreeable to the laws of England and the charters, are generally introduced, to which there is a postscript in p. 77 ;—and in page 95 the report of the committee on legal errors, touching land and stock, is made to the society and agreed to. The continuation of the printed minutes (in a second part) beginning at p. 45, up to p. 98, was sent in like manner as the former part, to all the King's ministers and the several correspondent societies of London and Dublin, and to all the members of the Barbadoes society in England —Here I must ingenuously confess, that when some of our members, who were also distinguished and even popular members of the Legislature, began to perceive the advances of this society towards reforming the iniquitous and obnoxious laws concerning Negro government, and the laws which authorised the destruction of landed property, so contrary to the excellent laws of England,—I say, when misled by old habitudes, they began to dislike the further discussion of such topics in the Society of Arts, and some whispering murmurs were spread abroad, as if “gentlemen had been insidiously drawn in, by general expressions in the plan of the institution of the society, which seemed to have had a view to the posterior introduction of these dangerous designs against their established laws and customs, which designs they did not then apprehend.” And after this time it seemed as if, under these impressions, parties were formed to throw cold water on such dangerous designs.—So far may national prejudices, contracted from childhood, operate on worthy minds; for very worthy men were, at that time,

time, animated to oppose any humane amendment of the Slave-laws. But on this occasion we may remark that the old proverb, viz. that "it is an ill wind which blows nobody good," must be applied to resolve many seeming oddities or absurdities, among good men. There will always be found in every community, some bad laws or evil customs which have crept into practice by time, by which some people are profited; and if such people are well connected, and have smooth and ingratiating manners, they will find means of influencing and warping the opinions even of good and unsuspecting men: and in this colony, many evils are fostered and supported under such ill winds.

After this blighting wind on the humane designs of the society, Philo-Xylon (who was probably a member of the society) took up the pen, and during the years 1787 and 1788, contrived to give, in the Barbadoes Gazette (by his account of several conversations) faithful copies of the material parts of the manuscript minutes of the proceedings of the society, in their committees, which not having been yet reported to the society, therefore could not be published in the printed minutes, but remain as postponed in the minutes of the committee, and open to the inspection of the members. Whether Philo-Xylon was the member who submitted to the consideration of the society, on the 20th January 1783, (p. 47 of the printed minutes) the paper which exposed and reprobated the obnoxious laws of the colony, so repugnant to the charters, is not necessary to be told; but it is evident that the conversations related by Philo-Xylon (for he has never given any opinion of his own) are very consonant (though published

lished in the Barbadoes Gazette, so late as four or five years afterwards) to the subjects treated of in the papers laid before the society.

Judging from the small success of these transactions in the society, that I could expect little or nothing from the Legislature here, I turned my thoughts to the further trial of some experiments on my own Negroes within my own property, in order to find out whether *rewards* might not have some better effect upon their senses, than by trusting to *punishments* alone. As a beginning of my *general plan*, I had, towards the end of the year 1783, taken the whips and all power of arbitrary punishments from all the overseers and their white servants, which occasioned my chief overseer to resign, and I soon dismissed all his deputies, who could not bear the loss of their whips: but at the same time, that a proper subordination and obedience to lawful orders and duty should be preserved, I created a magistracy out of the Negroes themselves, and appointed a court or jury of the elder Negroes or head men, for trial and punishment of all casual offences (and these courts were always to be held in my presence, or in that of my superintendant), which court very soon grew respectable. Seven of these men, being of the rank of drivers, in their different departments were also constituted *rulers*, as magistrates over all the gang, and were charged to see, at all times, that nothing should go wrong in the plantations; but that, on all necessary occasions, they should assemble and consult together, how any such wrong should be immediately rectified; and I made it known to all the gangs, that the authority of these rulers

rulers should supply the absence or vacancy of an overseer in all cases ; they making daily or occasional reports of all occurrences, to the proprietor or his delegate, for his approbation or his orders. And some few months after the dismissal of the chief overseer and his five deputies, who could not submit to my new rule of government, which took the power of arbitrary punishment out of their hands, I accepted the offer of a near neighbour, well recommended (who rented a plantation bounding with mine) to serve me as superintendant over my new magistracy, on an allowance of five per cent. on all the neat proceeds of my crops, over and above the plantation expences, with a like interest in the annual increase of Negroes and cattle ; and who having all my new laws and conditions (the same as had been agreed to by my late chief overseer) read over to him, consented fully to them. But this man, one of the old stamp or school of overseers, who promised every thing, but perhaps only on the probability that some favourable accident of my death or absence might, in some short time, leave an uncontrouled power in his hands, not only grew careless and indolent, but was so imprudent in conversations among his old acquaintances, as to publish his opinions that my plan of lenity to the Negroes counteracted all his endeavours, and that he held himself no way accountable for the ill condition of the estate and its ruinous crops, for that he could obtain no labour from the Negroes ; and his insinuations and hints among the Negroes themselves tended to the same malignant purpose. I had private and undoubted intelligence of this indiscretion and infidelity, from  
persons

persons of honour in the neighbourhood ; and gently questioned him upon it (for I wished to have served him on account of his large family) : he solemnly denied any such discourses as having ever come from him. But having sufficient reason to suspect his truth, and therefore observing his conduct closer, by my own evidence I discovered proofs of his general infidelity. He, like all my former overseers, obliged me to hire all my holing at the rate of £3\* per acre, he himself with his gang of Negroes, being one of the undertakers to serve me on those occasions ; while, as my superintendant, he was indulgent enough to let them do their work so ill, that my crops sunk almost to nothing ; and every thing was done so much out of time that many species of produce never came to perfection, but wasted away, choked up with weeds.

Upon observing all this, I resolved to make a further experiment, in order to try whether I could not obtain the labour of my Negroes by *voluntary* means, instead of the old method by *violence* ; and that in such a way as should be proof against the insidious insinuations of my superintendant ; when, for a small pecuniary reward over and above their usual allowances, the poorest, feeblest, and by character, the most indolent Negroes in the whole gang, cheerfully performed the holing of my land for canes, (generally said to be the most laborious work) for less than a fourth part of the stated price paid to the undertakers for holing. Of this, there is a pretty exact account given in Philo-Xylon's eighth letter. I repeated the like experiment the following year with equal success ; and on the 18th

\* £2. 2. 10 $\frac{1}{4}$ . sterling.

of November, 1789, I gave all my slaves tenements of land, and pecuniary wages by the hour, the day, or the week, for their labour and services, nearly according to the plan as described in Philo-Xylon's ninth letter, and soon after dismissed my superintendant.

On this great change of paying wages, and of having rent to be received, it became necessary to settle a total new mode of accounting between the plantation and the labourers, now become *Copyhold Bond-slaves*. All the minor crops of the plantation, such as corn, grain of all sorts, yambs, eddoes, potatoes, &c. besides rum and melasses, &c. are brought into a regular cash account by weight and measure, charged to the copyhold store-keeper at market prices of the current time; and, by the store-keeper paid at the same prices, to such of the Copyholders as call for them, in part of wages; in whose option it is to take either cash or goods, according to their earnings, to answer all their wants. Rice, salt, salt-fish, barrelled pork, Cork butter, flour, bread, biscuit, candles, tobacco, and pipes, and all species of cloathing, are provided and furnished from the store at the lowest market prices. An account of what is paid for daily subsistence, and of what stands in their arrears, to answer the rents of their lands, the fines and forfeitures for delinquencies, their head-levy and all other casual demands, is accurately kept in columns with great simplicity, in books which check one another.

But among all the favourers (who felt the sweets) of the old system,—*Hinc illæ lachrymæ!*\* For now

\* So in the original: some words are wanting to make out the sense. I think I could supply them; but, the subject being invidious, I forbear. The passage, as it stands, will be plain enough to men acquainted with West Indian affairs.—W. D.

every species of provisions raised on the plantations, or bought from the merchants, is charged at the market price to the copyhold store, and discharged by what has been paid on the several accounts of every individual Bond-slave ; whereas for all those species heretofore, I never saw in any plantation-book of my estates any account of what became of all those several species, or how they were disposed of, nor of their value, other than in these concise words, "They were given in allowances to the Negroes and stock." Every year, for six years past, this great plantation has bought several hundred bushels of corn, and was scanty in all ground provisions, our own produce always falling short ; this year (1790), since the establishment of the Copyholders, though several less acres were planted last year in Guinea corn than usual, yet we have been able to sell several hundred bushels at a high price, and have still a great stock on hand. I can place this saving to no other account, than that there is now an exact account kept, by all produce being paid as cash to the Bond-slaves ; and also as all our watchmen are obliged to pay for all losses that happen on their watch, they have found it their interest to look well to their charge ; and consequently, that we have had much less stolen from us than before this new government took place ; which happened at the right season, about two months before Guinea corn was in ear.

To the plan, as given in Philo-Xylon's letters, I have made the following additions or alterations : viz. in addition to the advantages allowed to the breeding women who have children in the third gang,  
I have



I have made a fourth gang of younger children, to pick and carry smaller bundles [of grass] for which I allow the mothers half a bit [or about threepence sterling] for each such child, per week, in that gang; and both these little gangs are marshalled by good old women, as drivers, with suitable wages, who would otherwise have been superannuated or useless. Below these, there is a fifth gang called playing children, under another old woman as governante, with a suitable pension. For all these three little gangs there is a daily wholesome dinner provided at my charge, by another old pensioned woman as their cook; and this dinner is served in public, where they are all reviewed and counted by the book-keeper and the other plantation officers. A sixth gang, or sucking children, are attended in the field by two or three other old women as dry nurses; for I never allow the mothers to work with them at their backs, as they formerly used to do, when it was not uncommon, after a hot day, to bring the child home dead.

In the postscript to P. X. there are these few errors: Law No. 6, line 3, after the word *watching*, add, *or of six days labour for a whole week*; and in law the 9th, in the first line of that law, after the word *canes*, add *basket carriers*. [These errors have been corrected.]

It is now time to answer your four queries, viz.—  
1st. “Whether I consider the above-mentioned protecting law as likely to be efficient; and whether any, and what, other laws are in contemplation, for the improvement of the condition of Slaves?” I answer,—No protecting law, such as you have supposed, has passed to this hour. Killing a Slave is not murder,

murder, in any legal sense, in Barbadoes\*, nor are Negroes or Mulattoes evidence in any case against white criminals or debtors. I know of no law in contemplation for improving their condition. Query 2. “Whether any, and what *material* reforms have taken, and are likely to take place in the cloathing, feeding, labour, punishment, protection, and religious instruction of Slaves?” Answer,—Legally none. Query 3. “Whether the Slave-trade be *seriously* considered by sensible people, as essential, or even conducive, to the prosperity of Barbadoes?” Answer,—There are not many people *here* who think *seriously* on any subject, except those immediately excited by profit and loss, or by sensual appetites. A very few people, of a different class, think Barbadoes would rather be helped than hurt, by a stop being put to the Slave-trade with Africa; as under the proper protecting laws, which might then be obtained, the increase of their Negroes would be rapid. But they do not suppose the same for Jamaica, &c. Query 4, “Whether my Copy-holders succeed?” Answer,—They do, even beyond my own expectation.—In a 5th query, at some distance from the rest, you ask “Who are the principal promoters of my reforms?” In answer to this, I must previously observe, that sometimes reforms are promoted by people who never intended such reforms; and under this head, I can say positively, that my former tyrannical and fraudulent servants, who had been devouring my property for thirty years before

\* But clause 19th of No. 82, has since been repealed.

my arrival, were the first promoters or stimulators of my reforms; and after them, the gentlemen who, in the Society of Arts here, passed the propositions in the printed minutes, from p. 47 to p. 81, and agreed to the report in p. 95; and who afterwards carried on the resolutions in the committee, as quoted in Philo-Xylon's letters the fifth, sixth, and seventh, when the further consideration of that subject was postponed,—were the only voluntary promoters; but I must not name them, as it would be improper to say who made the majority to postpone, as perhaps they may, at a future time, change their minds and return to their first opinions. But, excepting such promoters as these were, I cannot say that, to this hour, I can name any one gentleman who has put a hand to the plough, except myself and those whom I can command, my immediate servants. Though of late, and since the proceedings of Parliament, two or three persons have complimented me, and I believe sincerely, that “If I can succeed in my undertaking, and make the practicability of my plan demonstrable, so as to be generally adopted, I shall deserve a statue.” But no one has yet adopted the system except myself. In excuse for this backwardness, it may be said that modest men, as well as indolent ones, do not like to be foremost in leading new fashions.

The dominion of the overseers is prodigious in a warm climate, where every exertion of mind or body is fatigue, which does not immediately lead to vulgar pleasures.

Since the publication of our society's minutes, or of Philo-Xylon's letters, and the proceedings in Parliament,

we have frequently heard in conversations that there is now more lenity in overseers\* than formerly. But upon what foundation does this boasted lenity rest? Is it supported or enforced by any law? How long will it last? But is it true?—No proof but this *gratis dictum*. Good men, in a lawless community, may feel, and may be governed by the force of good morals. But how many per cent. of such good men may there be in a colony, where killing a Negro or Mulatto is no murder, even if proved \*: and where, Negroes, though in numbers a majority of three to one more than white people, can legally prove nothing, except to hang one another?

I know nothing of any old law revived here for protecting slaves.—It is a false tale.

As you wish to see the printed minutes of our Barbadoes society, I dare say, if you apply, and make use of my name, with compliments, to Mr. Moore, Secretary to the London Society of Arts, he will be able to lend you copies of both first and second publications.

It may seem extraordinary, that I, who, since my arrival here, never thought that the continuation of the Slave-trade from Africa was necessary for this well-peopled colony, should not have adopted the same mode of thinking, which governed the English committee. The truth is, that I saw no advantage which the abolishing of that trade could bring to this island, or to mankind, unless at the same time, the infamous laws which I have pointed out were solemnly repealed. And, if they were repealed, which no proprietor of character, in this colony, would or could oppose (if

\* See the last note.

done in England\*) it would be of no consequence, either to us, in this chartered colony, or indeed to the people of humanity in Europe, whether the African trade, under proper regulations, was continued or abolished. For, by all the best accounts I ever read, or heard, of the trading coast of Africa, the inhabitants, in respect of laws and government, are the most miserable people upon earth †.

The word *slave*, in Greek or in Latin, is only the denomination of a *servant*; and every person who has no property in a civilized country, must *serve*, or *labour*, for the supply of his wants. But in a civilized country, laws of humanity, to soften servitude, should be established. To make this colony such a civilized country, it is only necessary to exert the authority of the *charters*, by suppressing the infamous laws above mentioned. And under such humane laws, as we should then enjoy, our *Slaves*, or *servants*, our *servi*, or *douloi*, would then be as happy, as our *Slaves* were three or four hundred years ago in England; and especially those who were *adscripti glebae*, and indulged, as mine now are, with copy-hold tenements.—But to make this humane law effectual, the planta-

\* “The system of colony government (says Mr. Long, vol. i. p. 403.) and the imperfections of their several laws, are objects which never were, but which ought to be strictly canvassed, examined, and amended by the British Parliament.”—“An event,” he adds, “much more to be wished than expected.”—In the same vol. p. 96. he observes that, in the English islands, “almost every thing in respect to their policy, their taxation, the administration of government and justice, their population and their trade, is wrong, or left to chance.” W. D.

† See in the Appendix, the note marked with page 18.

tions must be legally *established as manors*, nearly as proposed in P.X.'s seventh letter; and with allotments of land, as stated in P.X.'s ninth letter; that is, half acres of good, plantable land, for first gang lots, and one third of an acre for each second gang lot; which by my experience, are found fully sufficient; and my copy-holders are all contented. I am, Sir, &c.

JOSHUA STEELE.

P. S. My paper is full, and I have not yet answered, what you have asked, namely, to send you any pamphlets, which may have appeared here, for or against the subject of Slavery. It would be needless to send your own or Mr. Ramsay's; and I have seen nothing in favour of Slavery, worth being read or answered.—Perch, who knows the taste of his readers, ventured, upon my engaging to purchase 40 copies (£5 or £3 11 5 ster.) of P. X.'s Letters for England, to print the whole edition of *ninety*; and in half a year's time, he sold only one.

Having been lately appointed a Member of Council, I shall, on all proper occasions, use my best endeavours to counteract the prejudices which hitherto have misled the humanity of the colony.

To Mr. William Dickson,  
at Mr. Phillips's, Bookseller,  
George Yard, Lombard-street, London

\*.\* The foregoing letter, though of a later date than any other of Mr. Steele's papers, is placed first, as briefly describing his whole procedure. The rest of his papers, which contain the facts and arguments at large, follow nearly in the order of their dates. W.D.

## No. II.

## TO THE EQUITY AND POLICY OF A GREAT NATION\*.

Is the Government of Slaves in the British Colonies, the best possible?—Are Negroes exposed to the cruelty of White servants, or even of Vagrants?—Can Laws better Slaves' condition without emancipation?—Probably Government will not listen to mercenary scribblers—or to insinuation that, it being Proprietor's interest not to destroy Slave, White servant will not.—Parliament will probably enquire why Planters cannot keep up Negroes—while Absentees' servants, without land, raise large gangs.—That the public suffer not while one rises on another's ruin, false—for depravity saps public prosperity.—Tax should be laid on Absentees, except women and minors.—Proprietor's occasional residence would check servant's rapacity.—Barbadoes greatly changed in 140 years.—Luxury of late much retrenched there.—Beginnings and endings of things obscure.—Crisis astonishes—Commerce worshipped—natural progress, Agriculture, Arts, &c.—Yet Commerce promoted, Agriculture oppressed—Colony Commerce wholly depends on Agriculture.—Colonies' interest ill understood—Hence many changes, little improvement—May not Slavery be regulated by humanity and religion?—May not convicts supply the place of Slaves?—Evils of Slavery arise from drawing impassable line between White and Black servants—putting Negroes out of Law's protection—which individual kindness cannot countervail.—Hence pride of poor Whites so inflated, that they would sooner starve than work like Negroes—Convicts would not work with Negroes, would be punished and rebel—White natives would abhor them.—Humane and pious alteration of Laws would increase happiness of Slaves, fortunes of Masters, and credit of Colonies.

THE subjects of the SLAVE-TRADE and SLAVERY in all their extent, so warmly agitated at present in the

\* An attentive reader of Mr. Steele's other papers, will easily perceive, by the style, manner, and sentiments, that *this* also came from his pen; but, even if it did not, the *essay* deserves attention, from

mother-country, may properly be considered under the following heads of enquiry :

[The two first heads of enquiry having been superseded by the abolition of the African Slave-trade, are here omitted.]

Thirdly. Is the *government of the Slaves*, when settled in the *British colonies*, the *best possible*? or, are the Slaves there, usually, or oftentimes, exposed (without remedy or legal protection) to the inhumanity of illiterate and unfeeling white servants? or even to the malice of any profligate white vagrants whatever? who having no property in them, have consequently no interest in their preservation, such as might restrain any of their intemperate passions; while their masters are, for the most part, absentees. And, is it in the power of prudent laws, to enable the proprietors of estates, to better the treatment and condition of the plantation Slaves, without absolute emancipation?

The arguments likely to arise from the answer to these enquiries, will probably throw a new light on this subject, so interesting, as it is, to the proprietors of estates in these colonies, and to the commerce of the mother-country; and to such an investigation, it is probable, the prudence of Administration at home, is about to reduce it; without being led astray and enflamed by the malignant writings of mercenary scribblers, on one side, or of being too easily cooled by the insinuations of those, who endeavour to persuade peo-

from its immediate relation to our subjects, and as a specimen of the literature of Barbadoes, on a subject not very open to discussion in some of the other colonies. It first appeared in the Gazette of that island, but evidently merits republication. W. D.  
ple



ple in England, that because it cannot be the interest of a proprietor to destroy his own beast, or his own Slave, that therefore the same interested feeling must operate on the minds of the hired servants here, while their masters are living, in indolent ignorance, on the other side of the *Atlantic*. Nor can it be doubted, that the sagacity of Parliament, will endeavour to be informed, by what means, and through what defects in the colony laws, it has frequently happened, that many large landed plantations here, have not been able to keep up their stock of Negroes; while the servants of absent proprietors, without being owners of any land at all, have contrived to raise gangs of Negroes, as their own property, almost sufficient to supply (upon hire) the deficiency of labour on their masters' half ruined estates;—ruined by accumulated arrears of servants' wages, and hired labour, and by collusive dealings with corrupt agents, and faithless, or careless attornies! That this has generally been the case on the estates of minors and absentees,—experience has proved, that not one in twenty has escaped it.

And although it has been said, that when one man rises upon the ruin of another, the public prosperity may nevertheless continue the same; this cannot be true, where these changes are purely the effects of infidelity and immoral practices; for, under a general depravity of morals, public prosperity must feel a decline; and therefore, to give some check to the progress of such corrupt practices, good policy points out, that a rateable tax should be laid on the estates of all absentees, (women and minors excepted) gently to compel, or induce, them to reside in the colony, (at least

least one year in seven) which would operate, in some degree, to restrain the unbounded rapacity of faithless servants.

To compare the present state of incomes and expences, morals and dealings, of masters and of servants, in Barbadoes at this day, with what they were 140 years ago, when Ligon wrote his plain and minute account of them, it is matter of astonishment to us, to observe the difference; and again to compare the style of expences in luxuries of the table, between the present time, and only twenty years ago, it will appear, that, by a virtuous necessity, we are greatly reformed \*. But the beginnings and endings of most things in nature, are frequently obscured and unobserved in their slow progress, till by certain critical symptoms, we are astonished at their magnitude, or at their decline, and total disappearance. People in England, and in all its dependencies, have been of late years, worshipping commerce, as if it were a self-created, and independent good; without immediately considering that its foundation was first, *agriculture*, and secondly *manual arts*. For *agriculture*, by raising food, *increases population*;—increased *population* purchases its food, by the exercise of the *manual arts*; and upon these two *foundations*, *commerce* is raised and supported by the profitable exchange of useful commodities; and as *commerce* advances from one nation to another, it necessarily calls forth *navigation* as its *carrier*; by which circulation of trade, the *landed interest* is reciprocally assisted by the *commerce*, which

\* See in the Appendix, the note marked page 23.

in the first instance it *supports*. From this deduction, is it not evident, that AGRICULTURE is the primary fundamental BASIS of this great *superstructure*, ARTS, MANUFACTURES, COMMERCE, and NAVIGATION? And yet, in the intoxication of prosperity, it is a melancholy truth, that we have often heard, in private, and in public, in national assemblies, and in superior councils, of men of great sway and boasted abilities, seemingly dedicating all their thoughts, and directing all their powers of oratory, to the advancement of these superstructures, *commerce and navigation*; while *agriculture*, the real and sole foundation of all, has been sometimes, *and in some capital parts*, oppressed and languishing. The share which the British sugar colonies contribute, (*and an important share it is,*) to the commerce and navigation of the empire, must here, (in like manner as the *contributions* of the *mother-country*,) arise fundamentally, from the products of their *agriculture*, and of their saleable *manufactures*, such as they are; and consequently, if any regulations should be made, nominally to promote the commerce and navigation of these colonies, though perhaps unfavourable to their agriculture, the effect would be ruinous, instead of being profitable to the general interest. It is notorious, that by errors of this kind, the production and manufacturing of indigo and some other commodities, were formerly removed from these colonies, to the general loss of the empire. And, though under the present circumstances relative to these colonies, we hope for the best, as members of the empire, and faithfully attached to the general welfare of the parent state, we have reason to apprehend, that our  
part

part in the general interest, has not been well understood, and managed to the best advantage, for several years past; otherwise, there could not have been a necessity for so many changes in systems, as we have seen in less than thirty years, with little or no visible change or improvement in the prosperity of our common wealth; except we may observe, that many people have retired from landed estates, to draw their revenues with less trouble from the public funds, than they did from their farmers; while they are succeeded in their lands by new men, who had made, or increased their fortunes, from small beginnings, and chiefly from the public necessities of the times; but who, from a peculiar kind of sagacity, have thought, that land might be a more solid and permanent security, than those funds, on which they first built their fortunes.

Another requisite, on the subject of Slavery, is to enquire,

Fourthly. Whether it may not be regulated solely, by the dictates of humanity, and religious principles? And whether the deficiency of African Slaves, might not as well be supplied by *convict criminals* from BRITAIN, with great and mutual advantages, both to the mother country and to the colonies?

This proposition implies a compassionate feeling for the innocent, but oppressed Africans, on one hand; and a degree of revengeful aversion against our own incorrigible, convict countrymen, on the other. But if neither rewards nor punishments could induce such criminals to work in a winter country, what shall invite them to it, in the torrid zone?

Observation and experience have discovered, that  
all

all the evils arising from Negro slavery, are derived from the impolicy of drawing an impassable boundary line, between black and white servants; which puts the former, and all their race, out of the protection of the laws of humanity; or that, notwithstanding the casual, or partial kindness of some proprietors, towards their well deserving servants, they still continue, (as descendants of Negroes) even if made free, incapable of claiming the protection of the common law, against the injuries and violences of the white race.

This ignominious mark on the coloured race, so exultingly enjoyed by the meanest of the white people, operates so effectually on their pride, that they feel their dignity, (even while, from their indolence, they are languishing in extreme poverty) and are less afraid of starving to death, than of the scandal of being seen to debase themselves by working like Negroes \*.

And if convict criminals were sent to these colonies, they would soon learn this legal distinction of *white*

\* I may add, that, pride and scandal apart, it is hardly to be expected, that white men will submit to the severe and endless drudgery of the field, on *sugar* plantations. They were forced to it in the days of Ligon. It ought manifestly to be done by cattle. Even the free Negroes all decline it; though many of them are industrious enough in other pursuits; and even in cultivation, when they can rent or purchase a bit of land. The poor white militia tenants cultivate, with their own hands, the little spots allotted to them, by the respective proprietors, for their military service. Many of the whites too, are carpenters, masons, blacksmiths, &c. but cannot always get work, owing to the number of Slaves now bred to mechanical employments. On the whole, the poor Whites in Barbadoes are much pinched; and too many of them may be said to live by robbing the Negroes, whom the laws leave almost entirely in their power. W. D.

*prero-*

*prerogative* over the coloured race, and consequently their disdaining to work with Negroes, would provoke punishments, which in their turn, would excite rebellions ; while on the other hand, as convicts for crimes, they would be regarded, by the free white natives of the colony, with unconquerable horror, fear, and aversion.

Therefore, it is not merely humanity, or piety, in the hearts of the planters, which are wanting to rectify what is amiss ;—but it is, *a total alteration of the local laws*, agreeably to the dictates of humanity and piety, which must make the condition of the Slaves more happy, and, at the same time, encrease the fortunes and comforts of their masters, beside giving a commercial credit to the colonies, better than they have ever yet had, in this century.

A REAL COLONIST.

## No. III.

Extract from the 47th and following pages of the  
*“ Institution and first Proceedings of the Society  
 for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and  
 Commerce, established in Barbadoes, 1781\*.”*

Barbadoes, printed by John Orderson and Co.

FOR CONSIDERATION OF THE SOCIETY OF ARTS,  
 MANUFACTURES AND COMMERCE IN BARBADOES,  
 JANUARY 20, 1783.

(BY THE HON. JOSHUA STEELE†.)

The subject proposed.—Its arrangement and general principles.

IN page 25 of the printed minutes of this society, there is a reference to a miscellaneous committee, to take to consideration and to report facts towards obtaining the state of this island, as to its commerce and public burdens, comparing the profits and prosperity of former times with the calamitous circumstances of the late and present times, in order to investigate

\* The only copy of this book, which I know of, in London, belongs to the Society of Arts, &c. who do not allow the transactions of other societies to be taken out of their library. But, by the favour and interest of certain respectable members, I was permitted to transcribe this paper, at the house of the Society, in the Adelphi. W. D.

† On this “impolitic and inhuman law,” (subjecting Slaves to be seized and sold for their owner’s debts) “there is an excellent memoir, written by the late Hon. Joshua Steele, and presented to the Society of Arts in Barbadoes, in 1783.”

Poyer’s History of Barbadoes, p. 335.

from

from what natural, civil, legal, private, or public causes such differences may have arisen, &c.

No committee having as yet taken this proposition into consideration, there is reason to think that, from the great extent of matter contained in the reference, gentlemen may have been at a loss where and how to begin, upon an inquisition into a variety of facts and causes, involved in the obscurity of past times; let us therefore endeavour to reduce the enquiry into somewhat narrower bounds.

The inferiority in the crops of canes in this island, for many years past, is within the knowledge of thousands now living; and it is notorious that the want of seasonable rains, and the consequent diseases of blasts and pernicious insects, instead of being incidental for a year or two, as formerly, have become almost habitual for above twenty years past.

For such natural calamities as drought, blasts, and insects, it is probably not in the power of man to find an adequate remedy, otherwise than by suspending for some time, and in a great measure, the propagation of such plants as the present state of the climate seems to be unfriendly to; and, in their stead, extending the cultivation of those which are better able to withstand the aforesaid evils.

But that the prosperity of the island has suffered, and continues to suffer much from civil, legal, private, or public causes, is a very material part of the enquiry; a part which it lies within our power to investigate, and perhaps clearly to point out; and, if so demonstrated, it certainly lies within the power of men to find an adequate remedy for the evil.

The



The subjects most obviously proper to be taken into consideration, we shall arrange under the following heads; viz. The legal errors affecting a planter as to his landed property, and as to his labourers and stock necessary for cultivation, injurious to the prosperity and to the credit of the island.—2dly, The Slave Laws —3dly, Laws prohibiting Exportation of Horses, Asses, Cattle, and Provisions.—4thly, The want of a legal, current Species of coined Money.

But because our minds often fluctuate amidst a variety of vague opinions, for want of some fixed rules which, like standards either of measure or of weight, may enable us to compare and reduce those opinions to the certainty either of right or of wrong, let us state what we suppose may be admitted as incontrovertible principles or maxims of good policy, in any civil and permanent community; viz.

1st, That *land* is the primary fund from whence all materials, as the *stamina of wealth*, are derived.

2dly, That *labour* is the *instrument* whereby the spontaneous productions of land are increased and improved.

3dly, That to *employ labour* most advantageously in the *cultivation of land*, should be the study of every *individual proprietor*, and should be encouraged by the *legislative powers* in every community.

From which premises the following corollaries or conclusions naturally result:—

Coroll. 1st. If the number of labouring inhabitants, in proportion to the quantity of land, be very small, then *pasturage*, or the raising of cattle and live stock, will be their most advantageous employment.

2d.

2d. If the number of inhabitants be more than can be employed in raising cattle, &c. then a mixture of *agriculture* with pasturage becomes necessary, and more profitable than pasturage alone.

3d. When population increases beyond the numbers necessary for raising cattle, and for cultivating profitable crops by agriculture, then prudence and sound policy require that the introduction of *useful manufactures of native materials*, should be encouraged, in order to find employment for the otherwise idle hands.

## SECTION I.—LEGAL ERRORS TOUCHING LAND AND STOCK.

Produce of Barbadoes greater, and Labour and Expence less, formerly than now.—Its early Lawgivers selfish and narrow-minded—Its bad Laws ruin Planters, Slaves, and Lands.—Slaves considered as Brutes—Poor Whites too proud to work in Field.—Laws should protect Agriculture, as English Laws do.—Villeins were *Adscripti Glebæ*.—Statute of *Elegit*, &c.—Barbadoes Credit sinks, while English rises.—Canes first planted 1641.—First Settlers fled from Civil Wars.—Labourers were chiefly Slaves, ruled by indented and convict White Servants.—Land then cheap.—Barbadoes Law of Extent destructive, and repugnant to English—a selfish, barbarous Innovation. *Elegit* should be restored—Not easy to value Lands.—Value of Plantations in 1647, 1747, and 1783.—Purchasers too few in a comparatively small Community, to risk public Sale of Plantations.—Lawgivers should lean neither to Debtors nor Creditors.

LIGON, who was sent to this Island (of Barbadoes) in the year 1647, by Mr. Thomas Kendal, merchant, as a kind of factor, and who was chosen to keep the accounts of a plantation of 500 acres, 99 slaves, and  
28 white

28 white servants, between Major Hilliard and Col. Modyford, tells us (in page 22 of his History) that "Major William Hilliard sold half of that plantation, with its buildings and stock, to Col. Thomas Modyford, for 7000*l.* sterling, viz. 1600*l.* down, and the remainder by three instalments, within a year and a half:" and (in page 116) "that its crops of sugar and rum, from 200 acres in canes, were so great, as that the neat income was more than sufficient to pay the purchase of the whole (14,000*l.*) in two crops." For this, Ligon must be admitted as a good evidence, since he kept the accounts between the planters from 1647 to 1650. In page 96, he says, "Col. James Drax (who began his adventure with only 200*l.* sterling) declared he would not return to England till he could purchase 10,000*l.* a year in land there; and that Col. Modyford determined not to go home till he was worth 100,000*l.*; and that these two gentlemen were among the first understandings in the island." These anecdotes inform us, that the labour and expence in cultivation were far less in those times than they have been for above forty years past, as 200 acres of canes would require at least three times as many Slaves in our days; and they also seem to show us, that the spirit and intentions of our predecessors in this island were chiefly to embark in temporary adventures; and that the principal men did not mean to make settlements here for their posterity\*, but to realize as soon as they could, either in England or North America, as in general they actually did.

\* Confirmed by a recital in Statute No. 31.

Possessed of this spirit, laws were probably made suitable to such temporary ideas, to serve the turn of the then leading men, who felt little or nothing for the interests or prosperity of the future possessors; but, like the first adventurers in the bubbles of the Mississippi and of the South Sea, hasted to withdraw, and to secure their gains in time, leaving their successors to shift for themselves. Unfortunately for the present possessors, those original ill-constituted laws, with a few alterations and additions, but without any variation in the spirit or principle, continue to operate to this day.

Any sensible stranger who looked upon this island, (even before the late hurricane, but more especially since that event) would naturally ask, why so many plantation-works were dismantled? and why, in so populous an island, such tracts of land were lying waste? The probable answer, that the estates were broken up by creditors, would be unintelligible to an Englishman, till he should be informed that the nature of the laws in this island was to depopulate the lands, by taking off both labourers and cattle, and to destroy the buildings, for satisfaction of the first and principal creditors; and then to divide the ruined lands, as far as (in that state) their small value would reach, among the junior creditors, who were seldom able or willing to re-stock them with labourers or cattle, and much less to restore the works. For that the labourers being all Slaves, legally under the vilest conditions, considered as mere chattels, and no better than brutes, were thereby dispirited and worn out by a continual decrease; and that the numbers now remaining

maining were not adequate to the labour required for the lands which were still kept in cultivation. It is true, that the poor white inhabitants are many more than sufficient to supply this defect in Slaves, but the pride of freedom creates such a difference of rank, that they cannot condescend to work in the field with their inferiors \*, and therefore afford little or no assistance in agriculture, though, it is to be hoped, the expence of maintaining them in dissolute idleness will be much lessened by the act for encouraging the exercise of the manual arts, lately passed by the House of Assembly†. This answer, though not satisfactory, might be sufficient to convince the stranger, that, as the impolicy of such laws could not be inviting to British purchasers, for the same reason, such laws must be injurious to the general credit of the island; since no wise man would choose to lend money on a pledge which he should be sorry to have left on his hands, instead of being repaid.

According to the foregoing axioms and corollaries, it should be sound policy in every civilized community, to frame their laws in such a manner as to invite all their people to acts of industry; which can only be done by making labour pleasant and profitable, thereby to let the lowest labourers see, in prospect, that industry, uniformly exerted, leads to the certain amendment of their fortunes and condition: *Senes ut in otia tuta recedant!* And, in the next place, that, when a man has acquired a property in cultivated land, the laws should be so framed as to preserve and maintain

\* See in the Appendix, the Note marked page 26.

† Since passed the Council, and assented to by the Governor.

that

that property in cultivation, and by all human means to prevent it from being reduced to desert ; which wise provision must necessarily give every land-proprietor a credit in proportion to his property ; and, on the produce of such cultivated property, together with such credit, the prosperity of commerce, and of the whole community, principally depends.

That the laws of England were fortunately framed so as to answer both these ends, we cannot altogether attribute to the wisdom and foresight of our Gothic, Saxon, or Norman ancestors ; because they are remnants of the old feudal laws, calculated more for war than for commerce ; but it has been supreme wisdom, in the reformers of feudal barbarity, to retain such a portion of those laws as, by preserving landed property, and the means of cultivation, has raised the riches and credit of our mother country to so stupendous a height. By the laws of the Anglo-Saxons (which are to this day the common law of England, and the birthright of every British citizen in this island) the *Bond Slaves in husbandry* (afterwards called *Villeins* by the Normans) were *Adscripti Glebæ*, enrolled and attached inseparably to the land ; so that the labourers, whether free or bond, could not be taken away for a debt : and the oxen and beasts of tillage, including all the implements of agriculture (called *Ageris Caruæ*), could not be levied upon as chattels for a debt on judgment (nor can they at this day) lest the land should be waste, to the detriment of the common weal. These were protected so early as by the 51st of Henry III. stat. 4. A.D. 1266, viz. “ No man of religion, nor other, shall be distrained  
D 2 by

by his *beasts that gain his land*, nor by his *sheep*, for the *king's debt*, nor the *debt of any other man*, nor for any *other cause*, by the king's or other bailiff, but until they can find other distress or chattels sufficient, whereof they may levy the debt, or that is sufficient for the demand (except impounding of beasts that a man findeth in his ground *damage feasant*), after the use and custom of the realm." N. B. The Stat. of *Elegit* (the 13th of Edward I cap. 18, called Stat. Westminster 2d.) in the next reign, gave possession of one half of the land, rents, issues, and profits, to a judgment creditor, until the debt was paid.

But the laws of Barbadoes, so contrary to the laws of England in these salutary respects, are a principal leading cause why the credit and prosperity of this island have sunk, within fifty or sixty years past, in proportion as those of the mother country have risen.

Ligon (in page 86) informs us that sugar-canes were not planted in Barbadoes till about the year 1641 or 1642; so that the first settlers, at and after that period, were probably men, who, disgusted or ruined in the civil wars at home, or obnoxious to the ruling powers, sought some temporary asylum, where to try their fortunes, till the return of better times. In their days, the labour of the plantations was, for the most part, performed by newly-purchased Negro slaves, who, being absolute strangers to our language and manners, could only be compelled to work by whips in the hands of task-masters, constantly standing over them; which subordinate officers (Ligon, in page 114, informs us) were white bond-men for a term of years, i. e. indented servants and felons transports, purchased from

from the captains of trading ships; some of which servants were probably prepanned into their indentures by the frauds of kidnappers. But, exclusive of the Slaves, buildings, and stock, the lands were then of so little value among those adventurers (as he tells us in page 86), that, seven years before his arrival, the same plantation of 500 acres could have been purchased for 400*l*. It was in those early days that the fundamental erroneous laws, so detrimental to the credit and prosperity of the colony, were made, in direct contradiction to the happier laws of the mother-country. And let us observe, that the exception in the common and statute law of England in favour of the *Averia Carucæ* was not merely because the principal instrument used in tillage was a plough; for, by legal intendment and practice, it included, and now includes, all the means and instruments of cultivation; on this prudent policy—lest the land should lie waste! If our legislators here, in the last century, in framing the warrant of extent, omitted the aforesaid exception through ignorance, we should pity them; if the question was founded on a quibble, because such instruments of tillage were not used here, we should detest the authors of such a quibble.

When the older settlers sold to new adventurers, the desire of realizing their property in another country, prompted them to offer very tempting bargains, as appears by the instance quoted from Ligon; but as they could expect only a small part of the purchase-money to be paid in hand, their view of legislating was, probably, to model the law so as to compel the most expeditious manner of payment on judgments even  
to



to the ruin of the whole property of the debtor, though of more than double the value of the debt. For, in the form of their warrant to the marshal, set forth in the statute No. 28, (instead of taking the English statutes of the 51st of Henry III. and the *Elegit* of Edward I, for their guide, which exempt the *Averia Carucæ*) they empower him to seize not only the cattle but the labourers, and every instrument, engine, and utensil, necessary for the cultivation of the land and for saving the crops, even to the buildings, and the reducing of the estate to a waste. Then, in the same warrant, after the land shall be thus deprived of every thing necessary for manuring and cultivation, they give directions for extending it, not by a valuation of its annual rents, issues, and profits, according to the English statutes, but by an arbitrary valuation, in *fee*, and to be delivered to the creditor, or creditors, in satisfaction of their demands, to them and their heirs for ever. Conscious, however, of so flagrant a deviation from the venerable statute of *Elegit*\*, they think proper to give a reason which

\* 13 Edward I. ch. 18. called Westminster 2d, viz. "When debt is received, or acknowledged in the king's court, or damages awarded, it shall be from henceforth in the election of him that sueth for such debt or damages, to have a writ of *Fieri facias* unto the sheriff for to levy the debt of the lands or goods; or that the sheriff shall deliver to him all the chattels of the debtor (saving only his oxen and beasts of his plough) and the one half of his land, until the debt be levied, upon a reasonable price or extent. And if he be put out of that tenement, he shall recover by a writ of *Novel disseisin*, and after by a writ of *Redisseisin*, if need be." The English law of Extent is, "That the sheriff shall cause a jury to appraise the annual value of the rents, issues, and profits  
is

Is truly as absurd as if it was intended to be both ridiculous and a blunder. It stands thus, in No. 28, cl. 7; "And in regard the way used in England by extent upon lands, for the satisfaction of creditors, may not be so well practised here, by reason of the tedious and slow proceedings therein, and the *great disbursements the plaintiff must be at in stocking the land delivered to him*, before he can reap satisfaction, the authority here have enacted, &c." Whereas if the framers of this impolitic law had not wilfully strayed from the *equitable way used in England*, which prevents the labouring *Bond-slaves* and the *Averia Caruæ* from being separated from the estate, and the buildings from being torn to pieces, the plaintiff would not have been under the necessity of stocking the lands; but on the contrary, he would have been reimbursed much sooner, than by the way they have enacted; for, instead of the creditor having, by the Barbadoes law, a piece of waste land forced upon him (which, to make any profit of must still, at his expence, be re-stocked, and the buildings, &c. restored) he would, by keeping the estate, with all its stock, &c. together, have been paid his whole debt, in a reasonable time, out of the annual profits, without injury to junior creditors, to the debtor, or to his

of the lands, to the *utmost extent*, under which the creditor is to hold possession of one half, till the debt and costs are paid. Or if the creditor *chuses*, the sheriff may levy on the rents, issues, and profits, and deliver half to the creditor, every year, till paid: and as to such goods and chattels as the sheriff, by the *Elegit*, may take, they are not to be sold by the sheriff, but to be appraised by a jury, and, according to their valuation, delivered to the creditor, towards paying his demand."

heirs

heirs; for the *Adscripti Glebæ* being real estate, half the estate included half the Slaves.

This stat. No. 28, (probably the confirmation or adoption of a law in use before the Restoration) was passed in 1661, during the continuance of Lord Carlisle's patent as proprietor, eleven years after Ligon left the island, when he told us estates sold for about two years purchase; and when this statute was made, the legal interest of money was 15 per cent. In those times, when the income of an estate, kept entire, could so soon pay its debts, according to the mode of extent enacted by the laws of England, and used with success for many centuries prior to this Barbadoes law, what other reason could be given for so barbarous an innovation, but that the devisers of it had always in their minds to sell as soon as they could, for a little cash in hand, and for judgments on stipulated bonds to be paid by instalments, which this terrific law could compel, though to the certain ruin of the estate. But the gradual decline now so apparent, and approaching so near to the ruin of the colony, after the experience of more than a century, may, it is to be hoped, open the eyes and the understandings of the present planters to a serious and careful revision of their laws; and particularly to see that their common interest, as well as the particular interest of both debtor and creditor, especially of junior creditors, require that the operation of an extent; according to the English statute of *Elegit*, should be restored.

Customs and practices, whether good or bad, local or temporary, have generally the effect of establishing opinions; many of which must be erroneous.

It

It is a common opinion, that a price may be easily set on an acre of land, as its intrinsic or real value in fee. But this is far from being generally true: there is nothing perhaps more difficult; and many people, instead of exercising their judgment, rest on the credit of some old proverb, such as "The price of a thing is what it will bring." But the price of a thing, at one time, may not be the same at another time; and at either time, might not be the *intrinsic value*; though it was its price at both times. The plantation sold by voluntary sale, in Ligon's time, (anno 1647) for 14,000l.\* would probably have sold by auction, in or about the year 1747, for 40,000l.; although its annual neat income was probably not more than half what it was when it sold for 14,000l. At this time (1783) the neat income of such a plantation is probably not more than three fifths of what it was in the year 1747, and yet the price, by a voluntary sale, would probably not be less than 30,000l. None of these can be taken as the intrinsic value; but the annual neat income of such an estate, being regularly applied, would pay any debts which could have been lent on the credit of it; because the produce of cultivated lands, though annually differing by more or less, is as permanent as the land itself; and therefore the application of the annual profits of an estate (in a just proportion, whether more or less) is the most equitable and the most certain mode of paying debts, that, between debtor and creditor, can be devised. For, although in such an extensive and wealthy

\* The 14,000l. taken from Ligon, and consequently the other sums, in this paragraph, are sterling.—W. D.

country as Great Britain, where such multitudes of people, plenty of cash, of negotiable stocks and currency of bank notes abound, estates of almost any size may safely be sold by auction; yet, even there, in time of war, the court of chancery decrees no such sales, unless by consent of all parties. But, in so small a community as that of Barbadoes, cut off from all commerce, except that of the mother-country, to which it is always in debt, the number of wealthy people are too few, and the quantity of circulating cash never considerable enough to hazard any property of above 500*l.* or 1000*l.* value, to the chance of a public sale by auction; unless bonds and paper security for some part of the purchase, by instalments for a reasonable length of time, may be legally tendered and accepted instead of prompt payment in cash.

By the laws of England, a first execution under a judgment takes the chattels (*the Averiu Carucae* excepted) and the rents, issues, and profits of one half of the lands of the debtor, till the debt be paid. A second execution may take, at the same time, half the remainder, (*i. e.* one fourth of the whole) and a third may take an eighth, and so on. But a small portion must always be left for the subsistence of the debtor; and the whole, after the extinction of the debts, must revert to him and his heirs, &c. By the present laws of Barbadoes, an execution tears an estate in pieces; but the sales of the several lacerated parts, fall frequently as much below what was the value of the united estate, as the sundry materials of a broken-up ship are less than the value of the vessel sound and entire.

A debtor

A debtor who had many judgments against his British estates, might complain, from the partial feelings of his own case, that "the statute of *Elegit* bore too hard upon him, and that he might as well be ruined at once, as to have little more than the reversion of his estate." And, on the other hand, a Barbadoes creditor might unfeelingly say that, "although selling the Negroes and cattle by outcry might not produce half their value; and that although, to raise 200*l.* or 300*l.* by tearing out coppers and timbers, &c. from the buildings, might destroy 5000*l.* or 6000*l.* worth of the real value of an estate; yet his drift was only to recover as much as he could, by the legal mode of extension, and that he concerned himself no further." But would it become "the grave wisdom and impartiality of a legislative body to be influenced, on one side or the other, by such partial reasonings?

## SECTION II.—THE SLAVE-LAWS.

Thrice as many Hands as in Ligon's time, requisite now.—Negroes decrease from bad Laws:—Yet Whites cannot be said to decrease.—They formerly manufactured Cotton.—Barbadoes Law commutes Murder for 15*l.* steel.—and nullifies Evidence of Negroes, &c. against Whites.—Negroes, now chiefly Creoles, should be put into mild condition of Anglo-Saxons, and made *Adscripti Gloræ*.—Lawgivers should consider moral State of Governed.—Property the Ground of Honesty.—Master and Slave in Europe gradually reconciled, and Slavery mollified.—Pernicious Laws blight Colony's prosperity.—Negroes acute, and clearly distinguish Humanity from Brutality.—Barbadoes proprietor sleeps with open doors, amidst three or four hundred of his Slaves.—Hence Negroes not so malevolent as to require merciless Laws.—Laws which make worthless Europeans unfeeling Tyrants—who waste and purloin their Employers' property—be-  
cause

cause Negroes, &c. can prove nothing against them.—Black Husband first murders White Adulterer and then himself!—Legal catastrophe perpetrated on his suspected Advisers, by Fire and Faggot!—Even Master or Overseer cannot protect Negroes from Lust and Tyranny of underling Whites.—White Man's tale is legal *truth*, that of a whole Gang of Negroes, legally, a *lie*.—Improvement of Property by *attaching Negroes to soil*, and giving them heritable tenements—Field-Negroes would increase, as House-Negroes now do.—Stat. 5, Geo. II. stated, and commented on.—Parbadoes Law, No. 28, breaks through Family Settlements.—Cuts off Heirs in Mother-country, from Inheritance in that Colony.

WE have observed before, that in the times mentioned by Ligon, 99 slaves and 28 white servants were sufficient for cultivation, and for manufacturing the produce of 200 acres of canes, at the rate of 36½ ten-gallon pots per acre; and now by some unfavourable changes in the seasons, and by the necessity of preparing manure, we suppose that at least three times that number would be required, to give the necessary degree of cultivation to that quantity of canes. A competent number of Slaves, before this [American] war, have been usually and annually imported; but their numbers (notwithstanding what should have been their natural increase by births, if they had lived under happier circumstances) have always been on the decline; and, at this time, they are by several thousands below the requisite stock. The climate is certainly more suitable to Negroes than to Europeans, and yet it cannot be said that the white inhabitants are decreased; when it is considered that, in the year 1662, great numbers emigrated, under an act made in that year to encourage people to go from this island, with Lord Windsor

*Windsor*, to inhabit *Jamāica*; to which emigration the calamity, occasioned by the great drought of the following year, probably added many more; and again, by another act in 1666, to encourage the people to enlist in the expedition against the French in *St. Kitt's*, with several other emigrations in later times\*. But we shall not be at a loss to account for the decrease of the number of Negroes, when we consider the impolicy and inhumanity of the laws which are still held over them.

By Stat. No. 82, cl. 19†, A. D. 1688, it is enacted “That if any Slave under punishment by his master, or by his order, shall suffer in *life or member*, no person shall be liable to any fine for the same. But if any person shall wantonly or cruelly kill his own Slave, he shall pay the treasury £ 15 †. If he intentionally so kills the Slave of another, besides paying the owner double the value, and £ 25 † to the public, he shall be bound to his good behaviour by the next justice of peace, during the pleasure of the governor and council; and if any man kill another's Slave by accident, he shall only be liable to the owner's action at law; but if any one kill a Slave by night, out of the common road, or attempting to steal his provisions, &c. he shall

\* The excessive number of poor white people in those days necessarily maintained themselves by manufacturing cotton, &c. (according to the 3d corollary) till, by those emigrations, so many of the poor were drawn away, as that the practice and the knowledge of manufactures were almost extinguished in the colony.

† Lately repealed.—W. D.

‡ These sums are sterling. See Hall's edition of the Laws of Barbadoes, p. 120; and Abridg. Plantation Laws, 1704, p. 243.—W. D.



not be accountable for it.”—If this does not encourage white men to kill Slaves, it certainly goes a great way towards it; and at least, it is an incentive to Slaves to kill themselves, or one another.

By Stat. 148, cl. 8, A. D. 1721, “No *descendant of Negroes* shall be admitted as *evidence in any case whatsoever*, except on the trial of Slaves.” If this does not provoke Slaves to tell lies, it certainly does not invite them to tell truth. As, according to Ligon’s account, there were not above two thirds of the island in plantations, in the year 1650, we must suppose that in the year 1688, the great number of African born Slaves, brought into the plantations in chains, and compelled to labour by the terrors of corporal punishment, might have made it appear necessary to enact a temporary law, so harsh as the Statute No. 82; but when the great majority of the Negroes were become vernacular (born in the island) naturalized by language, and familiarized by custom; did not policy, as well as humanity, require them to be put under milder conditions, such as were granted to the Slaves of our Saxon ancestors? that is, to be *Adscripti Glebæ*, inseparably attached, by enrolment, to the land, settled on little tenements of houses and gardens, descendible to their heirs, and bound, under certain prescribed obligations of paying their rent by their days’ work, either for their master or otherwise, by his order or permission; and all this under the legal penalty of forfeiting their little copy holds, reverting to their former Slavery, and thereby becoming what our ancestors called *Villeins in Gross*, or mere chattels. This species of property and freedom, conferred on the Saxon bond-men, though  
it

it was far from an entire manumission, induced them, however, to go more cheerfully to their work ; their labour had a visible reward, and they looked on their growing offspring with pleasure. For filial dependence adds vigour to parental affection ; while the parental independence, among Negro slaves, generally dissolves the natural bonds of duty and affection.

Legislators should consider men, according to the circumstances under which they are legally placed ; either as capable of fidelity, truth, and integrity, or as prone to treachery, falsehood, and dishonesty.

By giving them a title to some fixed property, the necessity of being rogues is taken away ; and the fear of forfeiting that property will evidently make it their interest to be honest.

It is not to be doubted but that, in the origin of Slavery in Europe, a like kind of diffidence subsisted between Master and Slave, while they were strangers to each other, and spoke not the same language ; and consequently, a similar kind of harsh treatment continued until a race of vernacular Slaves grew up, when more humane sentiments (assisted by the Christian religion) might have softened the Masters so far as to have given their Bond-men those milder conditions of servitude, which they enjoyed as copy-holders, until they were, in length of time, all enfranchised : though to this day, the laws of Slavery, under the title of Bond-men and Villenage, stand unrepealed in England. After our ancestors had relaxed so far towards their Slaves, as to give them copy-hold property, they not only admitted their credibility in evidence,

dence, but even (by the Stat. of Exon, 14 Edw. I.) made them capable, in a deficiency of freeholders, to be put on the inquest of the Hundred Court.

In a climate so congenial, as Barbadoes is, with that of Africa, but with manifest advantage of salubrity, it cannot be doubted, but that the decrease of our Negro labourers, so obvious, and yet so detrimental to the property of individuals, and to the prosperity of the whole colony, must be entirely owing to the pernicious operation of those degrading laws, on the minds of men who are by no means deficient in natural powers; and to whom, with our language, we have unavoidably communicated both sensibility and sentiments, sufficient to distinguish clearly between humanity and brutality.

It remains then to consider, whether the same necessity which induced our predecessors to make those tyrannical and disgraceful laws, subsists at present or not? If a proprietor who, for the first time in his life, coming here from Europe, can sleep with open doors, surrounded by three or four hundred of his Negroes, without the least apprehension of injury to his person\*; does such an instance show those Slaves to be of so savage and malevolent a nature, as to require their being put under such degrading and merciless laws?

\* Gentlemen like Mr. Steele have nothing to fear from the Negroes, and show few or no signs of apprehension. If persons of a different description are troubled with qualms of terror, their own consciences can best inform them who are to blame. See Dr. Pinckard's Notes on the West Indies, vol. ii. p. 205, and vol. iii. p. 64—74; Letters on Slavery, p. 49, 93.—W. D.

Laws which, at the same time, create and elevate some, perhaps of the most worthless and profligate of human beings, into unfeeling tyrants, without any natural, or pre-eminent distinction, but that they are of European race ; and by which laws they have, eventually, the property of their masters abandoned to their discretion, to devour, to squander, to let run to waste, or to purloin, without controul and without account ; for Negroes or their descendants, whether Slaves or free, are no evidences against them, in any case whatsoever. (See Stat. No. 148, cl. 8.)

The miscreant amours of a white servant on a plantation, about three years ago, gratified under the smarting influence of the lash, which, by the laws of nature, provoked the contubernal husband to murder first the adulterer and then himself ; together with the horrid catastrophe, legally perpetrated, with faggot and fire,\* on the suspected accessorial advisers,—ought never to be forgotten, while those laws stand unrepealed ; under the cover of which, similar brutalities are, or may be daily practised on almost every plantation in the island.

Not even the humanity of the Master, or of a discreet Chief Overseer, can effectually save the Negroes from the capricious tyranny of the Inferior Servants on a plantation. For, from the moment any white servant takes possession of his post, he, without any written or verbal instruction, considers himself as fully invested with all the legal powers of the proprietor,

\* Other *unnecessarily* cruel and vindictive, though (in the *W. Indies*) legal, executions of Negroes, are noticed in Abst. Evid. ch. 4 ; Long, ii. 458, *Letters on Slavery*, p. 18-21.—W. D.

to punish at his pleasure, according to the indefinite latitude of the laws; whether it be to gratify his *lust*, or to display his authority. The whip, the shackles, the dungeon, are at all times in his power; and his employment of them, in his intendment, is to be construed, as by *his master's order*. His tale is always *legal truth*, while the evidence of the whole gang of Negroes, is, *by law*, treated as a *lie*.

Upon a slight view of what has been said in the foregoing sections, it may appear as if the planter, who should adopt the system alluded to, would lose a great part of his property by attaching the Negroes to the land, giving them heritable tenements on a rent, and allowing them wages for their labour, in order to balance that rent. But though the unreasonable and unprofitable extent of his dominion over his Slaves would be somewhat abridged, his property, upon the whole, would be rather improved than diminished, by being much better secured, and by a great deal of the uncertainty in the charges of cultivation being cut off. For, as the labourers and the land would be legally inseparable, the value of the Slaves must, and would of course, be added in estimation to that of the land. And as to fixing them under a rent, as copy-holders, on little tenements of land, to be occupied by them, raising whatever they might think most advantageous towards their support, and obliging them to do all their master's work at stated rates, and to work for no one else without his licence, the penalty of confiscation, for failure in any part of these conditions, and of being reduced again to the state of a *villein in gross*, would be a much more

more effectual curb, for keeping them within the bounds of their duty, than those engines of tyranny which are now often delegated to persons of inferior understandings, and, for the most part, unfit for such a trust. The quantity of land in their several tenements, whether divided or kept altogether, need not be more, perhaps not so much, as is now entirely occupied in raising provisions for them. For, taking altogether the value of the land, and the labour spent upon it, employed in raising corn, &c. for the Negroes on a plantation, suppose for 100 men, women, and children, on a reasonable and low rent (which quantity must be sufficient to allow for the embezzlement of White servants, Negro thefts, and destruction by vermin and putrefaction) with the cost of their clothing, salt, fish, and other foreign expences attending them (though exclusive of the doctor's salary, and of the land and Negro-tax) will not amount to less, under the present mode, than 600*l.* currency \*, per annum ; to which is to be added a considerable expence of watching, carrying, and housing their several provisions ; all which operations afford many opportunities for such frauds and thefts.

But one very great advantage to be expected, as the consequence of this regulation, would be that, under this happier mode of life, the number of plantation Slaves would probably increase, so as to save buying any in future ; whereas, at this time, there are few estates which are not understocked with Negroes by at least 20 per cent. of their proper numbers ; not-

\* 428*l.* 11*s.* 5*d* sterling.

withstanding the frequent supplies which have been usually purchased: and that plantation has been uncommonly fortunate which has not decreased, by above one and a half per cent. of its Negroes annually, from its original number: though it must be admitted that Negroes, the private property of overseers, and house-negroes, not under the power of the plantation servants, generally increase. However, the natural or accidental decrease, by the deaths exceeding the births, from the year 1779 to 1781, (in which interval of two years, the hurricane happened) was upwards of 8 per cent., on the whole stock of Slaves then in the island.

It may be proper in this place, to set forth a clause in an act of the British Parliament, (5 Geo. II.) intitled, "*An Act for the more easy recovery of Debts in His Majesty's plantations and colonies in America:*" viz. "From and after the said 29th of September 1732, the houses, land, Negroes, and other *hereditaments* or *real estates*, situated or being within any of the said plantations, belonging to any person indebted, shall be liable and chargeable against all such debts, duties, and demands of what nature or kind soever, owing by any such persons to His Majesty, or any of his subjects, and shall and may be *assets for the satisfaction thereof, in like manner as real estates are, by the law of England*, liable to the satisfaction of debts due by bond, or other specialty, and shall be subject to the like remedies, proceedings, and process, in any court of law or equity, in any of the said plantations respectively, for seizing, extending, selling, or disposing of any such houses, lands, Negroes,

Negroes, or other hereditaments, or real estates, towards the satisfaction of such debts, duties, and demands; and, “*in like manner as personal estates in any of the said plantations respectively, are seized, sold, or disposed of, for the satisfaction of debts.*”

It is first to be observed, on this statute, that as neither the words *Islands*, or *West Indies in general*, or *Barbadoes in particular*, are mentioned in it, it is not at all clear that it was intended for this island, by the British Legislature; though it might have been so designed by some avaricious individual. Secondly, this clause was entirely unnecessary, if the Barbadoes act No. 28 was valid; in as much as that act had already made all real estates liable to judgment debts. But if the words, “*in like manner as real estates are, by the laws of England, liable to the satisfaction of debts due by bond, or other specialty,*” were to have any force here, it would be to restore the operation, in legal practice, of that ancient palladium of landed property, the *statute of Elegit*. But we have a recent instance, a case in point, to show that the crown lawyers in England pay no regard either to this clause in the British statute (5 Geo. II.), or to our act No. 28; but, considering the English statutes, subsisting prior to the establishment of this colony, as still in force, the extent from the crown, for the debt due by the late collector Clarke\*, instead of following the Barbadoes law, and breaking up the *Henly estate*, took possession, under the 33d Hen. VIII. chap. 39, by which the King, against his debtor, has the benefit

\* About 30,000*l.* sterling, as was said at the time; that is, in the year 1776 or 1777.—W. D.



of the statute of the Staple, (27 Ed. III. chap. 9.) referring to the Statute Merchant (13th Ed. I.) which gives possession of all the real and personal estate of the debtor, and to hold them till paid. If the crown officers and lawyers, in this case, had conceived that the English statutes were repealed by the posterior acts of this island, no doubt but the debt to the crown might have been sooner discharged, by breaking up the estate. But it is most probable that they considered the case to be otherwise, and therefore followed that method in which they were supported both by law and equity. And if the ancient English statutes are still in force, in behalf of the crown, undoubtedly they are equally so, in behalf of the subject; and indeed we have reason to think that the Barbadoes statute No. 28 ought to be regarded as a nullity. For, if the King alone cannot make a law to the prejudice of his British subjects, neither can his consent to a partial law, made by a local legislature here, contradictory to the ancient laws, made prior to the establishment of this colony, deprive his subjects in general of the benefit of those ancient laws which were their birth-right. But this law No. 28, by its operation in the mode of levying under an execution, breaks through the strongest family settlements that can be made, and cuts off many subjects in the mother-country, from their inheritance in this Island, an injustice which could not be effected by the laws of England.

Here ends the second section of this Paper.

The Third Section points out the impolicy of the Barbadoes Laws, No. 126, A. D. 1715, and  
No. 176,

No. 176, A.D. 1738, prohibiting the exportation of cattle, live stock, and provisions.

The fourth section is "on the want of a legal current coin in Barbadoes." But as these two sections, though highly important to that colony, have little or no connection with the more interesting subjects of this work, we shall omit them, and proceed to

A POSTSCRIPT TO THE PAPER LAID BEFORE THE SOCIETY, January 20th, 1783, (page 77, printed Minutes.)

Gov. Lowther authorized by the King to assent to Laws *not repugnant to Laws of Great Britain*—and restraining Masters, &c. from ill treating, maiming, or murdering Slaves, &c.—Barbadoes Statute of 1649 recites that King's writs do not run there, that few go there to settle, &c.—Laws not to be repugnant to Laws of England, a condition of Proprietary grant of Char. I. 1630 ;—Compliance with it, the interest both of the Mother-Country and Colony.—Copy-hold the happiest medium between Liberty and Slavery,—without which absolute Slaves cannot be made orderly Husbandmen.—St. Kitts Law of Extent, an improvement of Barbadoes one—yet its makers seem conscious of deviating from Laws of England.—Committee of Barbadoes Society of Arts, &c. decline giving opinion of Law of that Island, No. 28—as involving great legal Questions, in which the whole Colony may, eventually, be but a Party ;—yet they are grieved to see the ruin produced by that Law—and are convinced, by St. Kitts Law, that deviation from English Law unnecessary.—From 1779 to 1783, inclusive, a decrease of 59 Sugar Mills, and 6025 Slaves in Barbadoes.—The next year, a decrease of 13 Sugar Mills and 450 Slaves.

“EXTRACTS from the Royal Commissions and Instructions to a Governor of Barbadoes, and other documents, relative to the subjects referred to the consideration

deration of the Country Committee, was read (17 Feb. 1783) and referred to the said Committee, viz. *Extract from the Royal Commission to Gov. Lowther.*

“And that you Robert Lowther, by and with the advice and consent of our said council and assembly, or the major part of them, shall have full power and authority to make, constitute, and ordain laws and ordinances for the public peace, welfare, and good government of our said island, and of the people and inhabitants, and such others as shall resort thereto, and for the benefit of us, our heirs and successors, *which said laws and statutes are not to be repugnant but as near as may be, agreeable to the laws and statutes of this our kingdom of Great Britain.*”

*Extract from the Royal Instructions, No. 59.*

“You are to take care that no man’s life, member, freehold, or goods, be taken away or harmed, in any of our islands under your government, otherways than by established and known laws, no’ repugnant to, but as near as may be, agreeable to the laws of this kingdom.”

In regard to the treatment of Slaves, it is thus enjoined :

No. 99. “You shall endeavour to get a law passed, if not already done, for the *restraining of any inhuman severity* which, by ill Masters or Overseers, may be used towards their Christian Servants and Slaves ; and that provision be made therein, that *wilful killing of Indians and Negroes* may be *punished with death* ; and that a fit penalty may be imposed for the *maiming of them.*”

In the Barbadoes statute No. 31 (anno 1661) concerning

cerning conveyance of estates, in clause 1st, the following recital is made from a statute made while the island was under the proprietary grant to the Earl of Carlisle, viz. in 1649, “For that the King’s writs do not run here—and yet here is as much and more need of them; for that *few men come to this island, with any intention to settle themselves and posterities, but for the most part to gain or increase their estates, and then to sell their lands, and return, &c.*”

But by the stat. No. 36, (the four and a half per cent. act) it appears that, from the 12th June 1663, when the Earl of Carlisle’s grant was surrendered to the crown, the King’s writs did, from that period, run in the island; and that the *power and authority for enacting laws within this colony, must, from that period, have been derived from the grant or commission of Cha<sup>s</sup>. II. to Lord Willoughby, in letters patent under the great or privy seal of England, as well as the original patent to the Earl of Carlisle; and that the powers, as well as the limitation of the powers, thereby granted, to the free inhabitants of this island, are the legal constitution of the British colony in Barbadoes; to which the commissions of all succeeding governors have a relative conformity.* The clause so anxiously inserted, both in the commissions and instructions, “*that the laws be not repugnant to those of England,*” was inserted in the proprietary grant of Charles I. in 1630, under the great seal, and was probably a legal boundary, beyond which the powers of the crown could not go; at the same time that it was wisely calculated to restrain that spirit of alienation which is so likely to arise in the minds of men, where  
there

there is a diversity in their laws. If we value our constitution, we should know that our title to it must be maintained by keeping strictly within the limitation of our grant, as contained and reiterated in the King's patents and commissions. But the humour which prevailed in the first adventurers (as set forth in the recital of statute No. 31, of "*selling their estates, as soon as they could, and returning home,*") made it a matter of indifference to them, what became of the island, or of its constitution, after they had withdrawn themselves and their property. However, lest any accident should happen, which might cause advantage to be taken of the wanton infringement of those *constitutional limitations*, it is evidently the mutual interest, both of our brethren in the mother-country, and of the present legislative powers in this colony, to obtain a repeal and to expunge *all laws unnecessarily repugnant to the laws of England*; especially to such laws as were in being, prior to the establishment of the legislative powers in this island, by the proprietary grant to the Earl of Carlisle, in the year 1630, and directly under the crown in the year 1663. See Barbadoes statute No. 1, anno 1666.

In order to conform to the instruction No. 99, it should seem that the condition of copy-hold Slaves, previous to the reign of Queen Elizabeth, was the happiest medium that could be devised, between entire liberty and absolute slavery. Nor is it probable that, without the intervention of such a legal condition, for one or two generations, a set of absolute Slaves could be immediately transformed into an orderly set of husbandmen and artizans.

In the statute No. 1 (made in St. Christophers anno 1711, for settling courts and the forms of proceeding) the legislature there seem to have copied their warrant to the marshal, for levying on the estate of a debtor, from the form in the Barbadoes statute of 1661 ; but with a very material alteration in the order of attaching. For, instead of so immediately ruining the estate, as the Barbadoes form does, by beginning with the Negroes, before the cattle and moveables, the St. Kitts form reserves the Slaves for the last part of the levy, next before the land ; and puts the whole in the option of the debtor, either to have the effects sold by appraisement, or by public outcry. Again : the St. Kitts law allows no execution to issue forth, or be served, between the 31st August and the 1st day of March. And, in clause 11 of the same act, after repeating the words of the Barbadoes act, “ in regard the way used in England, by extent upon lands for the satisfaction of creditors (can very rarely \*) be well practised here, by reason of the tedious and slow proceedings therein (*to the disadvantage of trade*) and the great disbursements the plaintiff must (commonly) be at, in stocking the lands delivered to him, before he can reap any satisfaction,” with the softening additions, here marked in parentheses, which are not in the Barbadoes act ;—those legislators, however, as if still conscious that the reasons for making *a deviation so repugnant to the laws of the mother-country, were not founded in truth*, continue, in the same clause, thus : “ To the intent,

\* So in the original ; but the passage is not intelligible without this parenthesis ; unless the word “ cannot ” be introduced instead of it.—W. D.

however,

however, that the defendant may be allowed all reasonable means for reserving his inheritance, it is declared and enacted by the authority aforesaid, that, where judgment shall, at any time, be had against a defendant, whose lands or tenements are, or can be, set and let out at such a yearly rent, as will in a time certain, not exceeding FIVE YEARS, satisfy, and pay the plaintiff his full debt and costs, and 5 per cent. interest for such part as shall still remain unpaid; in such case, the law and form of extents in England shall be of full force, and put in practice here; provided always that the plaintiff shall not be obliged to take such land at a reasonable extent, but that where such lands are not already let out before judgment obtained, then it shall lie upon the defendant to find a tenant, within 30 days after judgment obtained, who will answer the above intent and design of this act."

By an additional act, in St. Kitts, No. 59 (anno 1724), "The marshal and the creditors are obliged to accept as payment, for the purchase of the effects sold by execution, sugars, cotton, indigo, and molasses, at the current prices."

At page 95 of the printed minutes, is the following *REPORT* from the *Miscellaneous or Country Committee*, made and agreed to, Feb. 16, 1784.

"The committee, at sundry meetings, from the 3d day of Nov. 1783 to this day inclusive, having maturely weighed the importance of making a separate report (according to order) on the *first* section of the paper referred to them on the 20th Jan. 1783, viz.

*Legal*

*Legal errors touching land and stock*, resolve that it will not become them to declare on the validity, or invalidity, of the Barbadoes statute No. 28, which prescribes the form of the warrant for execution on judgments; as in that subject is involved the legal consideration of a royal grant, letters patent, or commission under the great seal of England; and of how far the royal authority may, or may not, by posterior assent, alter, extend, or abridge, the delegated powers granted by such letters patent; as the committee apprehends such great questions may come to be agitated before the highest courts of judicature in Great Britain, where the whole island can only be a party. But, from sorrowful observation on the face of the country, on the destruction of sugar works and plantations, by executions levied on them, according to the mode directed by the Barbadoes statute No. 28, and on facts taken from the treasurer's books, which show that in the last four years, from the year 1779 to 1783 \* inclusive,

\* Here it were to be wished, that the committee had been more precise and explicit; because the period they mention includes the hurricane in 1780; as Mr Steele intimates, at p. 52 above. But, from their mode of expression, it must be plain to any one acquainted with the circumstances, that they mean to ascribe the decrease they state, to the levying of executions *alone*. For the hurricane, which destroyed from 3 to 4000 Slaves, would go more than half way towards accounting for the 6026 Slaves, and would much more than account for the 59 mills, or sugar works; being not quite 15 mills in each of the four years, which do not greatly exceed the mills (13) stated in the next paragraph, to have been destroyed, in one year, by executions alone. After the hurricane, I had occasion to visit all the eleven parishes in the island; and instead of 59 sugar works being *destroyed* by that awful visitation, I should be tempted to say that so many were not *left standing*. Sure I am, that, out of about 400 sugar works, nothing near 59 escaped



there was a decrease of 59 sugar mills, and of 6026 Negro slaves in the island; the committee are compelled to give it as their opinion, that the mode of execution, under the statute No. 28, is of *dangerous and ruinous consequence*, to the cultivation of landed property in this island, and to the prosperous existence of the colony. And they beg leave to observe, that the example of the laws and practices (in the case of execution) in the island of St. Christopher, as quoted in the postscript referred to this committee, Feb. 17, 1783, shows that the *deviation*, in this island, from the *English laws of execution and extent*, though so noxious, is not necessary.

J. STELLE, *V. President.*"

P. S. to the Minutes, of Aug. 30, 1784; Printed Minutes, p. 98.

"Between the year 1783 and 1784, there was a decrease of 13 sugar mills, and of 450 Slaves, in this island.

J. STEELE, *V. President.*"

escaped material injury. General Vaughan's letter to Government, admired at the time, for its laconic force, is justly emphatic on the general destruction of the houses. I remember, in particular, that the house of Mr. Edmund Skinner, in Speight's, was considered as a curiosity, because it had received no injury.

If there should be room in the Appendix; I shall add something more about the hurricane, as a note on this 62d page.—W. D.

## No. IV.

## EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM

JOSHUA STEELE, Esq. to \*\*\*\*\*

Dated Barbadoes, July 20th, 1786.

The Destruction of the Slaves on Mr. S.'s property, and throughout Barbadoes, has been greater than that of the Mexicans by the Spaniards.—He introduces new Government of Slaves, both for their happiness and his own profit.—Removes a Manager of the first character ; because he destroyed his Slaves.

THE Abbé Raynal, in painting the savage and brutal government of the Spaniards over the natives whom they enslaved in Mexico, shows us, from authentic accounts, that, in 141 years, the stock of these American Slaves were reduced from 905,000 to 250,073, which after all, upon an average, was only a decrease of the 197th part of the original stock, annually ; whereas, by the more inhuman laws of Barbadoes, I find, by an exact account of 40 years, on this estate, taken from 1743 to 1783, that there was a decrease in the stock of Negroes, from 492 to 246, which is exactly an 80th part of the original stock, annually decreased, on an average ; and the decrease of Negroes on the whole island has been about a 45th part annually, of the whole stock, in the last five years.—Or, to put this in another form, the cruelty of the Spaniards in Mexico, decreased their stock of Slaves, in the course of 141 years, by the proportion of  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. per annum : and the Severity of the Managers, on this estate, under the brutal laws of the colony, decreased the stock, in 40 years, in the proportion of about  $1\frac{1}{4}$  per cent.

cent. annually. But the unfeeling spirit of the legislature of Barbadoes suffers those laws to exist, after full conviction of their immorality ; under favour of which, the whole stock of Slaves in the island has been decreased, in five years, in the proportion of nearly  $2\frac{1}{4}$  per cent. per annum.

Since this unhappy discovery, I have employed and amused myself by introducing an entire new mode of governing my own Slaves, both for *their happiness* and also for *my own profit*, as far as I can effect it, under the present infamous laws. For this purpose, I changed my habitation, from the estate where I resided when I last wrote to you, to my principal one ; upon the removal of a manager of the first character for abilities, but who, in the course of  $3\frac{1}{4}$  years, diminished my stock of Negroes, on this estate, from 288 to 246, or about the proportion of  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. per annum.

## LETTERS

OF

PHILO-XYLON,

Containing the Substance of several Conversations at sundry Times, for seven Years past, on the Subject of

NEGRO LAWS, AND NEGRO GOVERNMENT,

*ON PLANTATIONS IN BARBADOES,*

[Applicable, with some Modifications, to all the British Sugar Islands].

## ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following twelve letters, or essays, originated in the manner above described by Mr. Steele, in his letter to me. They first appeared in the years 1787 and 1788, in the Barbadoes Gazette, one of the two weekly newspapers then published in that island; which, though occasionally containing things worthy of preservation, have, of course, a very limited circulation. Mr. Steele informs me, p. 19 above, that only *ninety* copies of these letters were printed by Mr. Perch of Barbadoes, as a pamphlet; so that this collection is as rare as it is interesting. Mr. Steele indirectly owns himself to be the author, in his letter to me; and almost explicitly, in the following extract from one of his other communications.—To pieces valuable in themselves, it will be accounted no disparagement that they were first inserted (for P.X.'s Letters can hardly be said to have been published) in a newspaper. Like them, the *essays*, many of them valuable, which compose the *Caribbeana*, printed, London, 1741, in two volumes quarto, first appeared in the Barbadoes Gazette; the oldest newspaper in the W. Indies, or perhaps in all America, except those of Boston and Philadelphia. It was established in 1731, by a Mr. Keimer, a friend of Dr. Franklin.

F

I have

I have nothing to say in praise of *Philo-Xylon*, as a literary signature. *Xylon* is the Greek word for wood; and has been used, I know not with what propriety, as the botanical name for the cotton-plant (*Vide Tournefortii Instit. Rei Herbar Classis 1. Genus 7.*)<sup>a</sup> so that the crabbed Greek compound, *Philo-Xylon*, means A Friend to Cotton, or to Cotton Planters. But the writer is no less a friend to Sugar Planters; especially to such of them as reside in this country, and have never seriously considered the laws by which they hold their property in the West Indies.--W. D.

*Extract of a Letter from Joshua Steele, Esq. to \*\*\**

Dated Barbadoes, Nov. 9th, 1789.

A Barbadoes pamphlet (Letters of Philo-Xylon) which I directed to be sent to you, and which sailed in Captain Brenan from hence, the 10th of Sept. last, will have shown you that my mental occupations have been steadily fixed to the same subject treated of in mine of July 20th, 1786. I have adopted the system as described in that pamphlet; and my Copy-hold Bond-slaves will all be settled on this estate, in their tenements, before Christmas. The survey and division of the lands have taken up some time; but are now almost completed.

——— when I return, which, however, I cannot think of doing for a year or two more; as I must stay to see the government of my copy-holders thoroughly confirmed by experience, and by some act of legislative power.

TO THE HON. THE MEMBERS OF COUNCIL AND  
ASSEMBLY,  
AND TO THE MEMBERS OF THE PATRIOTIC SOCIETY  
FOR ENCOURAGEMENT OF ARTS &c.,  
IN BARBADOES.

GENTLEMEN,

As the conversations and discourses collected in the following letters, arose from subjects which made their first public appearance in the printed transactions of the Society for the Encouragement of useful Arts and Industry in this Island, at sundry times from 1781 to 1784 inclusive, and which have been since continued in their manuscript minutes; and as the patriotic deliberations of that society have been occasionally approved of and adopted by public acts of the Legislature, the compiler of the discourses in these letters begs leave that the arguments contained in them may be addressed to those gentlemen under whose auspices they first publicly appeared,

With all due respect,  
From their most humble servant,  
P.X.

THE WRITER TO THE READER.

THE great exertions of humanity in favour of the oppressed subjects of ASIA and AFRICA, do honour to the hearts and heads of the BRITISH LEGISLATURE at this time. And it is to be hoped that their views, respecting the extensive empire of BRITAIN, in ASIA, are well directed and governed by the certain knowledge of facts.

As to what concerns the government of the savage nations in AFRICA, it does not appear that the power and influence of the mother country has much extent in the interior provinces of that great quarter of the globe ; nor that the opinions of the British Legislature are likely to effect any sensible alteration in their ancient manners and customs, though we may cease to traffic with them\*.

But the honour and welfare of the British nation, as a learned, prudent, and commercial people, being concerned to protect and sooth the SERVILE CONDITION of some hundred thousand LABOURERS of African descent, who are now in the *British West Indies*, and have been originally brought into, or bred in these colonies, during one hundred and fifty years past ; it may not be ungrateful to our countrymen at home, while they are deliberating on this important subject, to see the opinions of principal *planters*, in this MOTHER COLONY, on that head.

Early in the year 1787, several people in Barbadoes rose suddenly from the lowest state of profligate poverty, into easy and affluent circumstances, by being purchasers of *stolen cotton*, knowing it to be stolen, through the agency of NEGROES ; and some of better condition were suspected to have profited by the like means. But NEGROES, by a local law of the colony, being evidences, in no case whatsoever, against white people, the fraudulent receivers, though indicted, could not be brought to trial, for want of legal evidence, to enable the inquest to find A TRUE BILL. This and other defects in the colony laws, occa-

\* See in the Appendix, the Note marked with page 18.

sioned the GRAND JURY, in the June Sessions of that year, to address the Governor with a PRESENTMENT against the erroneous and unconstitutional STATUTE BOOK of the COLONY, for the reasons set forth in their *presentment* \*.

But as no public or legal inquisition appeared to have been instituted in consequence of this *presentment*, it is supposed that such conversations as are related in the following letters, may have been partly occasioned from considering the subjects set forth in the said presentment; and that they were communicated with the benevolent design of arming the public mind against the influence of ill-founded prejudices, while they were inviting a serious inquiry into the nature of such improvident *colonial* laws as were likely to afford a plausible incentive to the ardent zeal of a POWERFUL PEOPLE, at too great a distance to have been well-informed at that time.

## No. V.

### THE FIRST LETTER OF PHILO-XYLON.

Exorbitant rise in Price of Slaves, in 40 years — Cotton Planters may afford it, not Sugar Planters. — Slave must work 16 years to refund his value. — Barbadoes wants 20,000 more Slaves. — Cotton Planters succeed, but forced by Thieves to abandon the Article — because of bad Laws. — Case brought home to England, where all Men can give Evidence. — Evidence of Negroes, &c. annulled in Barbadoes, A. D. 1721, in the phrensy of a con-

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\* I have not been able to procure a copy of this important presentment. But Mr. Steele's charge to the grand Jury on the same subject, when he sat as judge at the Barbadoes December assizes in 1790, will be hereafter inserted. — W. D.

tested



tested Election.—Bribed Black Thief may repent and confess, but cannot convict White Villain.—Argument against admitting Evidence of Negroes, &c.—Moravian teacher relates, that, at Archbishop's table, old Negro told him, "Christian not made for Negro," and gave his reason—Young Barbadoes Clergyman's confusion on the occasion.

SIR,

NOTWITHSTANDING the severity of some people against excessive gaming, I am no enemy to a sober rubber of whist, introduced merely as an evening's relaxation from the more solemn occupations of the day ; because it accustoms men to calculate and estimate the probabilities of ordinary events. When I observe the score kept by pistreens, [1s. sterl.] or even by half dollars, I conceive their stakes are moderate ; but when I see men of business marking with moidores and joes, and whispering betts with earnest and anxious countenances, in the intervals of the deals, I am inclined to clap my hands upon my pockets, as if I was to squeeze through a mob at the door of a London theatre.

I called the other evening at a friend's house, where three gentlemen were waiting for one or two more, to make up the pistreen table ; and in the mean while, were very rationally discoursing on the present high price of Slaves.

What an enormous sum, said Mr. W. 110*l.* cur. for a field wench ! and the average upon the whole of a gang, including superannuated and infants, between seventy and eighty pounds a-head ! Above 20*l.* beyond the old average, at which they stood, in computation, for full 40 years, before the late war and the hurricane.

The

The cotton planters (when secured against thieves and receivers) may perhaps afford these prices ; but I am sure the sugar planters cannot. I have computed, Mr. D. with as much exactness as you could do, in any point of a rubber, and I find, that were I to give only 70 l. cur. [or 50 l. ster.] for a good field Negro, he must work sixteen years, one day, and a half, at the rate of 260 days in each year \*, before I can be repaid my purchase money, at ten per cent. on the capital, though I allow a discount every year, at the rate of 9 l. for his neat annual earnings.

I believe, sir, said Mr. D. your calculation is very just ; and yet on the other hand it appears to me that the present advance is no more than what, under the present circumstances it ought to be ; the interruption of the two late wars, and at the same time the increasing demands of Jamaica and the new islands, both for new and seasoned Negroes, naturally raised their prices ; while the calamities of blasts, vermin, and dry weather, disabled our Barbadoes plantations from purchasing recruits, as their usual waste of Negroes required ; so that, being above 20,000 Slaves short of our competent number, the average prices now given here are nearly in a just proportion to our wants. If we gave less, there would not be wanting agents to purchase them for the use of the other islands, as was practised during our years of poverty. But as we want an addition of about a third part of our present labouring stock, this want increases the demand so much, that the purchasers must necessarily give about a third part more than the old average ;

\* See in the Appendix, the Note marked page 71.

and

and lucky is the man, who has the good sense and the ability to secure them in time ; since new Negroes will not answer the present purpose, even if they could be obtained at one third part of this average. That some cotton planters have been very successful in their crops, and no less so, by their extraordinary attention in defending their produce from being stolen, is miraculously true ; while the depredations committed by thieves, under the encouragement of fraudulent receivers, on the properties of a much greater number of planters, have inclined many to renounce that culture, as despairing of any remedy, unless such as may be a remedy eventually worse than the disease.

Gentlemen, said the rev. Mr . . . \*, I am not without some hopes, though I must confess they are very slender, that these difficulties with which you are so embarrassed, may induce you and other men of property and power, as legislators and magistrates, to look into your own conduct, and to consider whether the evils you now feel so sorely affecting your properties, may not be principally derived from some impolitic system woven into the web of your motley laws. Suppose, for example's sake, that the third or fourth part of the standing wheat in the corn-fields of England (which could be as easily carried off in the night, as the pods of cotton are in Barbadoes) were generally stolen and carried to professed threshers, who kept barns for the purpose, surrounded by four or five acres of their own wheat ; from whence these

I think I could fill up this, and most of the other blanks with the names of the respective interlocutors ; but decline it for fear of mistakes.—W. D.

indus,

industrious thieves carried their threshed corn, in sacks, to ready receivers, who kindly paid them in cash, without any questions asked, how they were able to raise such great quantities, on so few acres, as they could pretend to be possessed of. The medium value of an acre of good wheat in England is about 8/. sterl. or say 10 l. curr. Ten men could cut, and carry off, the ears of such acre of wheat, in less than two hours: cotton, for dispatch and secrecy, must be stolen in the pods, and they must steal at least from four to five hundred pounds weight in the pod, to make one hundred pounds neat cotton; and to cut and carry this four or five hundred pounds weight of pods will require much more time, and at least as many hands, (considering its great bulk, as well as weight) as those employed in cutting and carrying off the like value of wheat in England; but the proprietors of the plundered wheat fields, finding they had been robbed, a general hue and cry would be set up. Now, gentlemen, how long do you suppose such an evil would exist in England, wherein so many fraudulent actors were concerned, before the authors were detected, publicly punished, and the evil effectually suppressed; in a country where all ranks of men, Slaves\*, bondmen, and apprentices, are admitted as legal evidences? Gentlemen, why do you stand mute, and winking at each other?—

I will answer for you, continued the rev. speaker, since I see you are ashamed to own a truth which, however, you cannot deny!—Sixty odd years ago, in the phrensy

\* No doubt, the word Slaves is here introduced, in courtesy to the prejudices of the persons addressed.—W. D.

of a contested election, a law disgraceful to humanity was passed in the colony (though perhaps never confirmed) "*That no descendants of Negroes should be admitted as evidence in any case whatsoever, except on the trial of Slaves.*" Under this law, any white villain, bribing your own Slaves to rob you of your property, may be the ready receiver of the stolen goods; and though, by some return of repentance, and grateful affection to a kind Master, the delinquent and deluded Slaves, or even free Negroes, might be induced to confess their error, and to give the clearest testimony against the felonious receiver who corrupted them, yet upon the ground of this absurd and impolitic law, the triumphant knave laughs in your face, and in the face of justice, under the common law, thus rendered ineffectual.

My good sir! exclaimed the other two gentlemen, the nature of things, in this colony, does not admit of any parallelism between our *colony laws* and those of England, where the people are all free and Christians; but Christian equity cannot be usefully applied to the government of Negro slaves. Our experience has taught us that all religious or philosophical refinements in this case, would only make bad worse!

Gentlemen, said the parson, I will candidly own to you that until I was brought to an inward sense of shame, by a discourse that arose at the Archbishop's table, after I received my ordination, I was as insensible of any defects in our internal police, as you are. His grace, among other questions concerning the island, asked me What success our parish ministers had in baptizing and converting Negro slaves? and, more particularly,  
How

How the catechist at the college proceeded with those Slaves; as he supposed they must have been all Christians, and well instructed? I answered, with some confusion, that I lived at too great a distance to know what was done at the college estate; but that in general, I did not think the christening of Negroes was much encouraged in other plantations;—when, luckily, as the question was very embarrassing to me, another gentleman, who I afterwards understood was of the Moravian sect, took it up.

My lord, said he, in my tour through Barbadoes, I spent two days at Coddington College, where I was very hospitably entertained; but I found only one old Negro, who told me he could say all his catechism. I asked him, if he did not find himself much happier and better since he became a Christian, than he was before? Why, sir, said he, I am an old man, and as a driver, am not put to common labour; but Christian not made for Negro in this country.—How so? said I; *What is your duty towards God?* He repeated it.—Very well, said I; *What is your duty towards your neighbour?* Ah, Master, I don't say that no more.—*Why so?* said I. Because, Master, I can't say it from my heart, *if I think of white man.* For when I sell a fowl or a pig to white man, I can't make him pay me; because Negro can't prove nothing against white man; and if white man goes and tells Justice that I am an impudent lying rogue, to say he owe me money, Justice will make constable whip me; or white man may beat me, cut me, or kill me before all so many black men, and no law to save black man, or punish white man for murder black man.—I could  
not

not help being shocked, said the Moravian, with this account from the old Negro; as I had learned before from some gentlemen of the island, that their Negro laws wanted great correction, and that the Slaves were better protected in some of the neighbouring colonies \*. —His lordship, moved with the Moravian's narrative, asked me, somewhat peevishly, if there were no laws for the equitable protection of the lives and little properties of Negroes in Barbadoes, against the villany of profligate men? Which put me in so much confusion, that I could scarcely pronounce intelligibly, that I was but young, and more taken up with other studies, than in attending to the laws of the colony.

Here, by the arrival of two more gentlemen, this discourse was interrupted; and we sat down to a rubber of whist.

P. X.

No. VI.

## THE SECOND LETTER OF P. X.

Pulpit Oratory said to be dangerous in a Curing-house, &c.—New-come Englishman cannot comprehend West Indian Laws and Reasonings—Old Lawyer's opinion of Barbadoes Act of 1721, annulling evidence of Negroes, &c.—It completely debases Slaves; and destroys the Property of one class of Whites, and the Morals of another.

SIR,

My last letter gave as much of the conversation that evening, as I thought our readers, considering its dryness, could digest.

The artful argument of the clergyman, by teasing interrogatories, obviously shocking to native prejudices, which from long habitude were become almost in-

\* See in the Appendix, the Note marked p. 76.

stinctive,

stinctive, sat so uneasily on the two first gentlemen, Mr. W. and Mr. D. that during every dealing of the cards, after the rev. Mr. ——— left the company, they could not forbear carping at the absurd system the parson was driving at. Mr. D. observed, that such visionary notions might be ornamental in the oratory of the pulpit ; where, by act of parliament, no man dares to contradict the preacher ; but in a curing-house, a counting-house, or a court-house, he would find the statutes of the island were flatly against such dangerous doctrines ; and therefore, with all his shifting and wriggling, neither he, nor his visionary pupils, would ever gain that point.

By these carpings, so much of the foregoing subject was discovered to a Mr. R. one of the new comers, that when we retreated from the whist table, to biscuit and a glass of wine, this gentleman said, he had come to us from dining where an old gentleman of the law was one of the company, and that the new bill for a cotton act was the last subject in conversation ; and, said he, as I have never been in these parts before this voyage, I was surprised to find, among English people, a mode of thinking, and a system of laws, so new to me, that I did not venture to join in the conversation, which however concluded in a general reference to the old lawyer for his opinion, on the probable efficacy of the proposed bill, if carried into a law ; Whether its prolixity might be safely abridged ; and Whether any more simple and effectual plan might be adopted ; which opinion I can relate to you, if you chuse to hear it. The general voice calling upon Mr. R. to gratify them, and expressing their high



high estimation of the worthy lawyer's candour and abilities, Mr. R. proceeded as follows :

I must observe, said the learned gentleman, in the first place ; that the differences in opinion, on this extensive and important subject, arise from the sudden impressions it has made on the minds of sundry people, to which, they have carelessly submitted, without viewing and examining it on all sides, and in all its circumstances. I will, therefore, consider it *first*, as a matter of fact ; *secondly*, as a matter of law ; *thirdly*, as a matter of policy ; and *fourthly*, I will consider the equity and moral tendency of the law made in 1721, which has unintentionally created the present difficulty.

FIRST then : the fact, I believe, is undoubted ; that cotton is generally stolen from the field by Negroes, and bought by white people, knowing it to be stolen.

SECONDLY : in matter of law ; by a very laconic clause, in a statute of 1721, for regulating elections of assembly men, Negroes being rendered incapable of giving evidence in any case whatsoever, against white people, they are thereby, (as *watchmen*) rendered of less use in defence of their masters' property than *dogs* ; but, Negroes are still employed as watchmen, and those watchmen, or their confederates, are the thieves who sell the stolen property to the fraudulent receivers ; and in case of a prosecution, the *onus probandi* lying entirely on the prosecutor, and all Negro evidence being cut off, consequently, for want of legal evidence, the prosecution must fall to the ground ; for the crops of cotton being so very various and uncertain

uncertain in produce (and so exposed to thievery) as from 30 lb. to 500 lb. per acre, the estimation of any quantity found, under a search-warrant or otherwise, in the house of a person suspected as a *receiver*, must without other proof\* than that proposed in the bill, be too vague, to be of any equitable use in support of such a prosecution.

THIRDLY: as a matter of policy; Negroes having a natural share (without book learning) of human reason, or cunning, and finding that their masters, by destroying their evidence, had rendered them, so far, useless guardians of their property; they, in their cunning, have found that they can gratify their revenge, for that ignominious mark indiscriminately set upon them; and at the same time, that they can also turn their masters' folly to their own private profit, by consenting to the theft and sale of their cotton, or any other vendible property, indefinitely left in their power, as watchmen.

FOURTHLY: considering the equity and moral tendency of this disqualifying statute, which has unwarily created this present difficulty; it is incontestable, that the white people, whatever their rank and condition may be, who are, or have been buyers of stolen cotton, or other stolen property, would not have exposed themselves to the scandal of so iniquitous a traffic, and to the danger of a criminal prosecution, if they had not found themselves so effectually secured, under the cover of this impolitic and inequitable law. From

\* The cotton act of 1787 directs an inquisition to measure and view the ground, on which any suspected stolen cotton may be said to have grown, and to estimate how much per acre such ground might have produced.

hence

hence it is evident that the hearts, and the moral sense of all this class of cotton receivers, high and low, are thoroughly corrupted by the operation of this improvident law. And it is likewise unhappily true, that the corrupting influence of so many white people (commonly looked up to, as people of good condition, rank, and authority) has been too prevalent, over the depressed minds of Slaves, to leave any scruples in their hearts, against following the base examples of their legal superiors. And,

FINALLY: in answer to your request of my opinion on the proposed bill; I think, notwithstanding its seeming prolixity, that it may, perhaps, be ineffectual in some points, through want of being further extended. For as the law of 1721 destroys the most effectual evidence you could have had, (that is, the confessional evidence of the thieves, or of some of their companions) the ingenious author of this bill is forced to take a long circuitous journey, as it were, of many miles, through rough and stony ways; because our predecessors have rashly stopped up, or destroyed the old plain path, which was comparatively only a quarter of an hour's walk. Possibly a more simple and effectual plan might be adopted by opening and repairing the old road, either in the whole, or in part. But in the meanwhile, as old habits of sixty or seventy years standing, like old debaucheries, are not easily, or suddenly corrected, I wish to see some temporary trial of this bill.

Was that all he said upon it? said Mr. D. I heard no more, replied Mr. R. as I came away to my engagement here.

Well,

Well, said Mr. D. I find that, in political expediency, there can be no reliance on the judgment of men who have been accustomed, for thirty or forty years, to prove either *wrong* to be *right*, or *right* to be *wrong*! Come, boy, give me the *sangris* \*! *Indignor, quandoque bonus dormitat Homerus*!—Alas! What are men when they outlive their rational faculties?

As I found the continuation of the argument and the *sangris* were likely to go on hand in hand together, I thought proper to make a sober retreat.

P. X.

## No. VII.

### THE THIRD LETTER OF P. X.

Dialogue on Negro Testimony.—Evidence of worthless Whites must be taken.—Some English Nobility and Gentry may be distantly related to Negroes.—Negroes might swear by any thing they feared—Yet all believe in God and a future State—Why may not Negroes be christianized by Protestants, as well as Papists?—And why may not Blacks be instructed as well as Whites?—Is the Fault in the Clergy or in bad Laws, which raise in Negroes no desire to embrace the Religion of the makers of such Laws?—English Laws depend not on a Witness's Religion, but punish him if perjured—"Let us do unto Negroes as we would that they should do unto us."

SIR,

WHILE I was cheapening some goods at Mr. T's store, the other day, I was entertained and edified by the following argumentative discourse, being the conclusion of a conversation, between two gentlemen whom I shall distinguish by the letters A. and B.

\* What is called *negus* in this country.—W. D.

G

A. And

A. And pray, why not make Negroes *evidences* against white criminals here, in some cases, if not in all, as well as in England?

B. My dear sir, consider the multitude of inconveniences attending such an innovation: in the first place, on what form or manner of oath would you swear them? For, since not one in three hundred of them is baptized, such (for want of instruction) being only nominal Christians, are totally incapable of comprehending the mysterious nature and obligation of an oath on the Evangelists.

A. Then, are we to suppose that all white people, though ever so abandoned, illiterate, and profligate, do nevertheless know the nature and obligation of that oath, and that their legal evidence accordingly must, or may, be depended upon, as unimpeachable truth?

B. No, sir, I will not say that;—innumerable instances of worthless and sordid white people, have proved the contrary.

A. Then upon what ground of reason, of equity, or of common sense, is this black line drawn in all cases, without limitation, over all the descendants of Negroes, some of whom may now, perhaps, be seated among the nobles and commons in Parliament?—for, without doubt, there has crept a little Negro blood among them, through wealthy matrimonial connections, in the course of near two centuries, since our first communication with them. And do we now intrust our lives and safety when sleeping, and in the preparation of our food, to the malignancies of Negroes and their descendants, (unenlightened and uncorrected as they are by Christian doctrine) with greater confidence

fidence than we should to many of the lower ranks of white people; whose profligacy renders them unworthy of all such personal trust, though they are admitted as legal evidences?

B. I acknowledge this to be a question, with an appearance of inconsistency attending it, not easy to be answered, reconciled, or accounted for: but, as I said before, on what, or by what, as a *test of truth*, would you swear Negroes as *legal evidences*?

A. By any thing of which they appear to have a solemn and awful idea: '*By the sun, by the moon, by the God who made and governs the universe*, (for I never yet spoke with a Negro who had not something like an innate idea of such a Supreme Being) or by *grave-dirt*, if you will; as it is certain, the solemnity of that oath appears to be connected with *their ideas of the survivance of departed souls, and of future rewards and punishments, under the decrees of the Divine Power*.

B. Why, sir, if you have found that their comprehension and contemplation extend so far as this, where can be the difficulty, and to what cause is it owing, that they are not christianized here, as well as in the Popish colonies?

A. Really, sir, I cannot give a clear answer to that, not being of the clerical profession; though the omission or neglect appears odd: for, in any common trade, an apprenticeship of seven years generally makes a smith, or a carpenter, or the like; and, to go a step higher, the same time and application makes an apothecary or a surgeon, and a few years more makes a physician; and every one of these trades and profes-

sions are of great worldly use and comfort to mankind, both white and coloured, indiscriminately. *The physician makes the diseased Negro as sound as if he had been a white man* ; and why the *divine profession* ( which except in the cases of some modern methodists\*, requires the study of a great many years) I say, why it cannot instruct the soul of a black man as well as that of a white one, I am not able to explain. Nor can I decide, whether the fault lies in the divines, or in the immorality of some unchristian ordinances, which, putting the whole race of Negroes out of the protection of the laws of humanity, raises no desire in them to embrace the religion of those who made and maintain such ordinances ; and which, after all, offers them no worldly advantages in this colony. However, sir, I can assert, upon great authority, that the laws of England ( which protect all mankind without distinction of colour) do not depend merely on the force of religion to purify and direct the heart of a witness, or of an accuser, when called upon to attest his evidence by an oath, before a magistrate, or a court ; but a record being made of such oath, if the same should be afterwards proved to have been wilfully false, the *perjured criminal* is liable to a most severe *punishment* ; the apprehension of which, keeps even *profligate villains* in some order.

Wherefore we may rationally suppose and expect, that when the prejudices of a narrow education in the nursery, are removed by more enlarged and equitable ideas, these legal errors will be corrected ; and then,

\* See in the Appendix, the Note marked\* page 84.

we shall be able, *without hesitation*, to say to our black or tawny servants, that WE WILL DO UNTO THEM, AS, under the like circumstances, WE WOULD THAT THEY SHOULD DO UNTO US!—Farewell. ^

P. X.

No. VIII.

### THE FOURTH LETTER OF P. X.

No harm would arise from Negro Evidence, so far as to restrain White Suborners and Receivers.—Because suspected witness cautiously credited by a discreet Court.—Disqualifying clause thrust into Barbadoes law No. 148, and why.—Clause recited and commented on.—Has for sixty-seven years proclaimed impunity for *Frauds, Felonies, and Murders*!—Do the Colonial *Charters* authorize this?—The word *original*, in the said clause, loose and indefinite.—Old English laws fostered not crimes, by disqualifying testimony of Bond-servants.—This disqualification, like Lydian Shepherd's magical ring, makes White Criminals virtually invisible.

SIR,

I DROPPED in after dinner at my friend R's, in the middle of a conversation; when, continuing the discourse, Mr. W. said, I cannot comprehend upon what ground it can be alledged, that laws so prudently enacted for keeping our Slaves under due subordination, can corrupt the morals of either *black* or *white*; for, as to Negro *experience* having shown us that they had no sense of morals, this was the necessary cause of our disqualifying their evidence in all cases against white people, and consequently if that restraint was taken away, in the smallest degree, it would be opening a door to a train of unknown and inconceivable evils.

For



For my part, said Mr. F. I am not much afraid of inconceivable evils likely to arise from a partial removal of that restraint, so far at least as might enable us to put an effectual stop to the stealing of *cotton, cattle, and Negroes*, by bringing the evidence of such crimes home to the *white actors, suborners, and receivers*. Nor do I think there ever was a just reason for such an unlimited disqualification; because the evidence of a suspicious person is never regarded by a discreet court; unless clearly supported by *probability* and corroborated by strong *circumstances*; nor was there ever a disqualifying law made by a considerate people, in my opinion, without clearly stating the reasons which rendered so extraordinary an act necessary; whereas no such reasons are offered in the preamble, or in any part of this disqualifying act. But the *calendars* of our *grand sessions*, and the notoriety of *recent facts*, furnish us with undeniable proofs of immoral practices encouraged by a single sentence, thrust into a clause of the statute No. 148, intituled, "*An Act to keep inviolate and preserve the freedom of elections, and appointing who shall be deemed freeholders, and capable of electing or being elected assembly-men, or vestry-men, or to serve on juries, to try real actions within this island.*"

The clause I mean is the 8th. I'll read it: "*And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, that no person whatsoever shall be admitted as a freeholder, OR AN EVIDENCE IN ANY CASE WHATSOEVER, WHOSE ORIGINAL EXTRACTION SHALL BE PROVED TO HAVE BEEN FROM A NEGRO, EXCEPTING ONLY ON THE TRIAL OF NEGROES AND OTHER SLAVES;*

not

*nor shall any other person or persons whatsoever, who are not duly qualified, according to the limitations and directions herein expressly mentioned and appointed, be deemed or allowed a freeholder or freeholders, to chuse or be chosen assembly-men, or vestry-men, for any parish in this island, or to serve as jurors on the trial of any real actions."*

The intent of introducing this clause into a statute, was manifestly to exclude a Negro or Mulatto from being either elector or elected, or from being a witness to the qualification of an elector, or of a candidate ; yet, by an unhappy perversion of this intention, we have seen sundry species of frauds and other atrocious crimes fostered, under the construction of this clause, by the injudicious intrusion of this sentence, "*Or an evidence in any case whatsoever, WHOSE ORIGINAL EXTRACTION SHALL BE PROVED TO HAVE BEEN FROM A NEGRO," except on the trial of Slaves.*

Here the rev. Mr. — broke in upon the speaker. — I beg your pardon, Mr. F. for interrupting you ; but it appears to me that the sentence you have just quoted, must be considered as a legal nullity ; being an assumption of a fact not authorized by revelation. I say, Are we, or are we not, all *originally* descended from *ADAM* and *EVE* ? But was Adam a Negro ? If so, we are all under this iniquitous disqualification. If he was not a Negro, shall we pronounce, against the authority of Scripture, that there were two originals ? For, although Cain might have lost his complexion for his crime ; nevertheless he was no *original* progenitor, being descended from Adam, the sole *original*

*original* of all mankind. Therefore if there ever was any temporary reason for such a sweeping disqualification, which for sixty-seven years has, to our shame, proclaimed and established *impunity* for FRAUDS, FELONIES, *and* MURDERS; yet I humbly conceive that, in this enlightened age, a few heads of amendment might now be moved, much to our honour, upon the following grounds: First, to blot out any words inconsistent with the Pentateuch: Secondly, to consider whether it can be for the interest of the proprietors of estates in this colony (even independent of religion and morality) to continue the disqualifying words, "*in all cases whatsoever?*" Thirdly, admitting that the want of a common intelligible language between us and our African-born savages, may be a plausible reason against *admitting their evidence in all cases*; we should however be well informed, whether we have a clear, legal right, under the authority of our CHARTERS, to disqualify generally any class of subjects, of whatever complexion, born within the British dominions, and under the allegiance of the Crown! Sir, I beg your pardon for this interruption, but I thought it my duty just to say so much.

Mr. F. answered: Your interruption, sir, is so favourable to the cause before us, that as an advocate on that side, I feel myself and the cause much obliged to you.

Good sir, said Mr. W. we don't mean by the word *original* to carry the pedigree up to Adam: we only mean to trace the descent from some or any Negro, or from a mixture of Negro blood.

Then, sir, replied the rev. gentleman, give me leave

leave to observe that, the positive sense and meaning of the word *original*, being as determinately fixed to absolute *originality*, as the number *one* is to the expression of *unity*, it follows that, such a word being inserted in a penal statute, as a definitive description, it is not legally in the power of any court to quibble away the letter of the law, in order to give judgment contrary to the strict and literal sense of the statute: and therefore you must admit the originality to which I have referred; and in that case, this disqualifying sentence in the clause must be a *nullity*.

My rev. friend, rejoined Mr. W. you stand upon such strong ground, that I will rather admit the word *original* to be a fatal error in the wording of the statute, than run the risk of an *anathema*. But, as I am clear in the propriety of disallowing the evidence of such worthless and unprincipled animals, *in any case whatsoever*, I wish and hope for a necessary amendment of the statute.

To which Mr. F. replied: Whoever has studied the manners of the human kind, by observing their progress from infancy to manhood, must be experimentally convinced, that there are only two modes, whereby they acquire principles of acting or thinking; and these are, first, by *imitation*, when, before the power of reasoning is discoverable in infants, they copy the examples of the temper and the manners of those who are nearest to them; and afterwards by *instruction*, when their capacity of reasoning begins to appear. If, then, our laws were so discreetly and so judiciously framed, as to have operated in giving good examples to all the rising generation, both white and coloured;  
and

and if we had established, and by due encouragement had brought into practice, regular modes of instructing the children of our Slaves, so as to have reclaimed them from the brutal manners of their 'savage ancestors, and from imitating the bad examples of our corrupt white people ; we should have seen at this day as good and as orderly a set of *labourers* in this colony, as the *bond-servants* were in England 250 years ago ; where the laws gave no encouragement to crimes, by *disqualifying the evidence of the labouring class*. But, alas ! no such mode of instruction has yet been adopted ; nor can any mode be of much use, while they are, in their childhood, led astray by examples of infamous morals, under the patronage of our laws.

Here the rev. Mr. — broke in again : I beg Mr. F's pardon once more, for interrupting him, to relate a short story which occurs to me on this occasion. I remember having read in an author, who wrote 2000 years ago, and who, in order to show how ingenuous minds, induced by opportunity, may be perverted to the commission of immoral acts, quotes from an ancient of 1000 years before him, the story of an honest Lydian shepherd, who having carelessly put on his finger a *gold ring*, which he accidentally found among human bones in a tomb, was surprised to find it had the wonderful effect of making him *invisible* in the midst of his companions ; and that by a slight change of its position, he could render himself either visible or invisible at his pleasure : wherefore after a few trials, to prove the certainty of its magical powers, this simple shepherd began to comprehend that some great exploit might be performed by the aid of this notable secret ;

and

and therefore, when according to custom, he was sent to court, to give an account of the annual increase of the king's flocks, his *invisibility* gave him an easy opportunity of *debauching the queen, killing the king, and possessing himself of the kingdom.*

And now, continued the rev. gentleman, I apply this to show that, in my judgment, by *invalidating the evidence of Negroes and their descendants* (which description includes at least two-thirds of the industrious inhabitants of this colony) we give advantages to the successful crimes of another description of men, as completely as the powers of that magical ring could do : for, without that wonderful INVISIBILITY, *frauds, felonies, and murders*, have been committed here, for above three score of years, with impunity.

The conversation continued ; but having filled my sheet, I must now lay down my pen, and perhaps you will think it enough for the present. Farewell.

P. X.

## No. IX.

### THE FIFTH LETTER OF P. X.

Another new comer from England states that the People cry out against Slave-trade,—that Government is not likely to support it, —that no decent man cares to say a word in favour of it.—Committee of Barbadoes Society of Arts, &c. states that Slave-laws make no distinction between New Negroes and those settled on Plantations, who should be *Attached to the Land* ;—because, when removed and sold, they generally die.—A Law enabling Proprietors, at their option, to register their Estates as Manors, and their Slaves as Copy-holders, would restore Colony's credit. —Abolition writers censured—Anglo-Saxon Laws adapted to civilize

civilize Savages, and gradually turn Slaves into Freemen.--We continually receive new fashions from England, while blind to the Deformity of our Laws, &c.—Men to be reformed by good Example, not arbitrary Punishment.—Barbadoes Society of Arts give time for gradual Reception of Truth.

SIR,

IN my last, I gave you some intimation of sending you the remainder of the conversation there partly related, at my future leisure; and which to my best recollection was to the following purport.

Upon the conclusion of the fable of the *Lydian shepherd*, the zeal and ingenuity of the parson were so well known to all the company, that the majority of them concluded this story of three thousand years old, to be the extemporaneous invention of his fertile genius, in order to support the *extravagant and absurd system*, as they called it, which he had been so long labouring in vain to bring into credit.—I suppose, said Mr. W. you will tell us, that this ancient piece of heathenish superstition is recorded by some of the church fathers, or popish saints. It is not, I believe, in your Bible, the oldest book-learning, I presume, that we have.

The rev. gentleman had just begun, with modest propriety, to answer him; when he was interrupted by the entrance of Mr. H. newly arrived from London, and who, it seems, had been announced, before my coming into the company, by Mr. F. as being expected to join them soon after dinner. The usual congratulatory compliments being over, Mr. F. asked him, if he had brought any of the late publications from England, on the subject of *Slavery*, the *African trade*, &c. and whether there was any credit to be given to the reports concerning

concerning that subject, and of its being likely to be agitated in Parliament.

Mr. H. answered, that he had not brought with him any of the many pamphlets and newspaper dissertations which he had read, or heard talked of in England; but he supposed, that either we must have had some of them, or would see them in the next packet newspapers. However, he could assure us that committees were formed in different parts of England; that petitions were prepared to be presented to Parliament, and that several people of weight and consideration had espoused the cause; that popular opinion had run so far into the ideal necessity of forcing some violent reformation, that he doubted whether the minister would exert himself (at the risk of losing any part of power and influence) in opposing a popular torrent, now running strong against a system, not morally defensible; and which was quite indifferent and foreign to his engagements in greater points. It is possible, continued Mr. H. that the AFRICAN COMPANY, and those immediately interested in that trade in *Liverpool* and *Bristol*, may make some opposition to the sudden and total suppression of it; but that company is not thought to have credit enough to stand against a popular cry; especially as the principles on which that trade is conducted, and all its consequences, its immorality and inhumanity are now *publicly* rendered so generally *odious*, that no decent man, however interested, can venture in *public* to say a word in its favour. It therefore gave me great pleasure to be informed by a printed copy of the minutes of the Society of Arts in Barbadoes, which a member of that society lent



lent me in London, that by their institution, in the year 1781, "*for the purpose of deliberating on, and promoting (as far as they could) whatever they judged would contribute to the advancement of the arts, manufactures, and commerce of this island,*" they had laid a foundation for *an inquiry into the probable causes of the declension of the prosperity of the colony, among which, the errors in the Negro laws,* pointed out in those minutes, have undergone, as I was informed, a minute discussion for about five years past ; and as I saw, in the printed minutes, the candid report of the committee confirmed by the society, about three or four years ago, on LEGAL ERRORS TOUCHING LAND AND STOCK ; I supposed as the subject of the SLAVE LAWS was in the next section to be considered, that it must have been discussed and reported long since ; though my friend in England had not been informed of it. But I should think that, as these matters are so strenuously agitated at this time in England, it would be material that the opinions of so candid and so respectable a body of gentlemen as your society seems to consist of, should now be published and sent home ; and if practicable carried into execution here, as soon as possible.

A committee of the society, replied Mr. F. after long and repeated deliberations, have come to some decisive opinions, which if you please, I can read to you, having an extract of the minutes of that committee in my pocket ; with the conclusion of the last meeting on that subject, reciting a summary recapitulation of a plan proposed to be established by law, for Negro government in future ; but which was postponed for  
further

further consideration.—At the desire of all the company, Mr. F. read as follows: “*The sketch of a form for a report, inserted in the resolutions which this committee had already agreed to, in their four first sittings of April, May, June, and July 1785, viz. Resolved that considering the general decrease of Negro slaves in this island, it appears to them, that there must be something radically wrong, either in the public laws, relating to Slaves, in this colony, or in the private government of them in plantations.—The committee are likewise of opinion, that the public laws of the island, making no legal distinction between Negroes in the hands of Guinea merchants, and Negroes settled on plantations, or cultivated grounds (whereby the plantation labouring Slaves being liable to be seized and sold as chattels, for payment of debts, and to be torn from their families and from their local connections) is one leading cause of their decrease; because it is notorious that the Negroes thus removed generally languish and die, in a short time; and the committee are therefore of opinion, that all plantation Slaves should be INSEPARABLY ATTACHED BY LAW, to the land, as real estates, in all cases whatsoever.*”

\* “*And the committee having duly considered the foregoing observations, relating to Villeins and Bond-slaves, according to the laws of England, are of opinion, that if a law was enacted, whereby the proprietors of estates in fee, might at THEIR OPTION, register their estates as MANORS, and their Slaves as Copy-*

\* This following part stands only for consideration, not being yet agreed to, but postponed.

holders.

holders, within them, as in the foregoing observations\* generally described; such a law, and such a system, would most effectually contribute to restore the sinking credit and condition of the plantations which yet remain in cultivation; as by *Attaching the Slaves to the Land*, and by giving them in their little copy-holds, a permanent and hereditary property, on easy conditions; while also, their PERSONS AND PROPERTY should be defended by EQUITABLE LAWS; such reasonable indulgence would certainly be a leading cause towards naturally increasing their numbers, by their offspring; and thereby, of increasing the income and value of every estate in the colony."

I cannot but observe, said Mr. H. that if the RURAL DEAN and other writers, who are exciting the popular clamour in England, against the cruelty of the planters in the West Indies, have seen the *publications of the Barbadoes Society of Arts*, which society, I understand, is composed of all the principal gentlemen in the island, besides several residing in England, and which publications they might have seen; since it appears, that *their printed minutes* are laid before the MINISTERS OF STATE, and several copies of them are communicated to the *Royal Society*, and to the *London and Dublin Societies of Arts*, and to several other persons; I say, if those writers and declaimers have seen those minutes, they are uncandid not to mention, to the honour of Barbadoes, that the gentlemen in this island have been endeavouring to find out, and to form, what may be

\* These observations, at length, are all entered on the minutes of the committee.

the most practicable system of reformation in their Negro laws and government.

Or, said Mr. F. if they have not seen or heard of *the printed minutes*, which have been in so many hands, both here, and in Great Britain and Ireland, for four years past, they must be either wilfully ignorant of them, or very presumptuous, in taking upon them to write on a subject with malevolence, concerning this colony, where they profess to have no correspondents to inform them, of what proceedings are and have been under such public discussion, in the colony itself, *for five years past*. And if the people of property here had not been uncommonly cautious and deliberate, in proceeding on a subject of such consequence, there is no doubt but the *proposed plan* in the society's minutes, or *some other good plan of amendment*, might have been presented to, and carried through the Legislature, before this time. However, as the outlines of such an amendment are in the hands of the ministers at home, we may hope that the clamours of an uninformed people at four thousand miles distance, will not be suffered to be carried to a dangerous extreme, before we are called upon and heard, in a cause which so nearly concerns our property\*.

I could wish, said Mr. H. to see the *whole* sketch of the plan, to which the extract you read to us refers. I imagine, from what I remember of the two first sections of the plan in the printed minutes, laid before the society in January 1783, that the design in contemplation, was to adopt the *Slave laws* of our *Saxon and Norman ancestors*, upon the successful experience

\* See in the Appendix, the note marked page 97.

of them, as the most probable way of civilizing savages, and of training them gradually to a rational observance of, and submission to equitable and fixed laws. For as the half civilized *Slaves* or *Bondmen* of our ancestors, above three hundred years ago, under the equitable laws of Old England, increased their numbers to such a degree, that the landlords began to find that the hired labour of freemen was (with less trouble) as cheap as that of bondmen, the lords of manors began then to prefer the receipt of a pecuniary rent to the disagreeable exaction of their personal labour; and thence their total enfranchisement grew insensibly, in the course of a century, or little more, without any loss either to individual owners or to the kingdom at large.

You have guessed very right, sir, answered Mr. F. for as it appears that the planters in this colony, being served by Slaves, have put themselves in a similar situation to that of our British ancestors of five or six hundred years ago; therefore, the design of the committee was, in some degree, to adopt the opinion of a great political author, who has said, "*it is occasionally necessary for nations to correct their political errors, by recurring back to the principles and precedents of old times.*" And although the legal connection between a gentleman and his Slaves here differs much more from the legal connection between the same gentleman and his servants in England, than the manners in England between Master and Bondslave in the reign of Edw. III. and those of the present day, between Master and Slave in this colony; yet as we continually receive the cut or fashion of our  
garments,

*garments, &c.* from England, we are too apt to be deceived by that *external conformity* in objects void of sense, while we are blind to the *internal deformity* of our morals, and of our local laws and customs, operating on human creatures, whose savage manners ought rather to be improved by good examples, and by the *equity* of our laws, than by the *iniquity* of arbitrary punishments. So that the cautious deliberation of the society was to give time to people to hear and consider, by degrees, wholesome truths; so as that the habitude of often hearing good advice, might perhaps at last induce them to take it. And therefore I agree with you in opinion that it would be right to make the SKETCH, which now lies dormant in the minutes of the society, as public as the rest of their minutes; as the most effectual way of collecting the *public opinion* on such a plan. I own, I have an exact copy of it, even now in my pocket; but as it grows late, I will reserve it for consideration at our next meeting.

The whole company requested Mr. F. to read it then, as half an hour more would make no great difference to them; but you, sir, will think this enough for the present; therefore, I bid you good night.

P. X.

No. X.

## THE SIXTH LETTER OF P. X.

Decrease of Slaves and proportionally of Produce — Slaves brought to England in danger of being lost, under English Laws. — Are Slave-laws agreeable to *Charter*? — Can Slave-merchant give title to Slave, agreeable to Laws of England, or of Nations? —

English laws bind apprentices, &c.—*Villein Regardent attached to Soil*, and not removable from his tenement,\* but by forfeiture. —*Villein in Gross* bound to Lord's person, and alienable.—Pure Villein's condition defined.—All could be punished, but not maimed or killed.—Villenage-laws have never been abrogated; —Military part only abolished.—Saxon Slaves had pieces of land for their labour,—then for rent;—hence many freed, and could sell their tenements to freemen.—Thus Villenage has worn out.—Laws favoured the escape of run-away Villeins in gross.—Makers of *Magna Charta* far more amiable than makers of West Indian Slave-laws.—Laws enumerated which bear hard on Negroes, even though free, and born under Crown's allegiance.—Illegal, and in defiance of *Charter*.—White felon or murderer has only to take care that no white person sees him do the act.—Hence notorious murders of Negroes, &c. go unpunished.—Notoriety has no legal effect, for no Coroner's Inquest made for such murders.

SIR,

THE following is a continuation of my last letter.—Mr. F. in compliance with the request of the company, read the proceedings of the committee of the Barbadoes Society of Arts, on the subject of the Slave-laws, viz.

“Miscellaneous Committee, April 10th, 1786.—A paper, dated August 16th 1785, intitled, *Matter for Consideration of the Committee*, with an additional preamble under the Title of *Sketch of a Form for a Report*, was read as follows: “THE REPORT of the miscellaneous or country committee, on the second section of the subjects, in a paper referred to them (on the 2d of January 1783) namely, CONCERNING THE SLAVE-LAWS.

“The committee having maturely considered this subject, at several meetings, from the 3d of November

to this day, and having before them the account of the general decrease of sugar mills and Negroes, in the colony, for five years from 1779 to 1783, which was a decrease of 72 mills, and of 6476 Negroes \*, as set forth in their *report of the first section*, and in their printed minutes (pages 96 and 98), and also an authentic account having been laid before them of the decrease of the Negroes, on a capital estate, for the space of forty years, on a plantation remarkably healthful, and very easy to be worked : it appeared that in the year 1743, the stock of Negroes on it were 419 ; that, at sundry times, in the course of 35 years following, supplies were purchased to the number of 73, which made the whole number to be accounted for 492 ; but at the end of 40 years, in 1783, there remained no more than 246 ; so that the decrease, in the 40 years, was exactly half, or fifty per cent.

“ And it appeared that the decrease of the crops on that estate, on an annual average, has been proportioned to the decrease of the stock of Negroes ; that is to say, that after the loss of 100 Negroes from that stock, the annual average produce was by 100 tierces of clayed sugar (neating above ten hundred weight each) less than it had been before ; so that the decrease of 6476 Negroes in the whole island ; without any other concurrent cause, may account for the crops of sugar having fallen short by above 6000 casks per annum, of what the colony had usually produced some years ago.

\* Exclusive of the mills and Negroes destroyed by the great hurricane, in 1780. See pages 61 and 62 above.—W. D.

“ And



"And the following observations being laid, by a member, before the committee (Aug. 1785) were read, viz.

"Matter for consideration of the committee, on the subject of the *Negro-laws and Negro-government Barbadoes*.

"As the proprietors of plantations are frequently obliged to go to England, on occasion of temporary business, or on account of their health; in either of which cases, if they are attended by any of their domestic Slaves, they are in danger of losing them, on their arrival in England, for want of being able to produce some legal title to the perpetual service of such Slaves, conformable to the laws of England.

"*Quære*; Is there any law, written or printed, by which a proprietor can prove his title to his Slave, under or conformable to the laws of England?"

And why, said Mr. W. why conformable to the laws of England? Will not the courts in England admit such proof as is authorized by OUR SLAVE-LAWS?

I apprehend they will not, answered Mr. F. unless we can show that our Slave-laws (according to the limitations of the CHARTER) are "not repugnant to the laws of England."

Oh, said Mr. W. I beg your pardon, Sir, but — please to read on, I'll say no more.

Mr. F. reads: "Does the original purchaser of an African Slave in this island, obtain any legal title from the merchant, or importer of Slaves, and of what nature? does it set forth any title of propriety, agreeable to the laws of England (or even to the laws of nations) to be in the importer, more than what depends

pend on his simple averment? and have not free Negroes been, at sundry times, trepanned by such dealers, and been brought contrary to the laws of nations, and sold here as Slaves?"

There is no doubt, said Mr. R. but such villainous actions have been done by worthless people; however, though an honest and unsuspecting man may be deceived in buying a stolen horse; it does not follow that he may not have a fair and just title to a horse, or any thing else, bought in an open and legal market; but according to the obligation of being *not repugnant to the laws of England*, I do not see how we can have any title to our Slaves, likely to be supported by the laws of England!—But please to read on, Sir.

Mr. F. reads: "The laws of England acknowledge two sorts of permanent servitude. First, BOND MEN, or servants for life, or for term of years, who may be legally compelled by their masters to obedience and to work, by corporal punishment; under this class the modern apprentices are included."

This, said Mr. R. I admit; and so are all other indentured servants from England, or elsewhere; but such indentures do not bind their posterity; however, please to read on, Sir.

Mr. F. reads: "Secondly, VILLEINS or village servants, so called from *villa*, a country farm; and these were distinguished into two sorts; the *villein regardent to a manor*, being attached to the soil, and not removable from his *copyhold tenement*, except by legal forfeiture; and the other, *villein in gross*, who was bound to the person of his lord or master, independent of the soil, and was alienable at pleasure. BRACTON, who

who wrote the first compleat treatise of the laws of England, in the reign of Henry III. defines the condition of the pure villein thus, (B. 2. ch. 8.) “*Who is bound to the performance of uncertain and undetermined service, and who cannot know over night, where or how he may be employed in the morning; that is, he is bound to perform whatever he is ordered.*” Both Bondmen and Villeins were liable by law to corporal punishment, by their masters, or by their orders; provided such punishment did not extend to maiming or killing. Villeinage was, by the common law, derived from the time of the Saxons, as appears by MAGNA CHARTA, ch. 14, and as recognized by the 3d of Edw. I. ch. 6. “And that no city, berough, or town, nor any man, be amerced without reasonable cause, and according to the quantity of his trespass; that is to say, every freeman, saving his freehold; a merchant, saving his merchandize; and a VILLEIN, saving his wainage; and that, by his or their peers.”

“The laws of *villénage* were never abrogated by any statute down to the present time; though the military parts of the feudal tenures were compleatly abolished by the 12th of Cha. II. ch. 24th, wherein *villénage* was not only unaltered, but a particular exception was made for *copyhold tenures*, which were the *tenures by villénage*; the rents whereof are to this day either paid in services to the lord, or owner, of the manor, or compounded for in money.

“Small portions of land were granted to the Saxon *Servi*, or *Slaves*, for their maintenance; in recompense for which they were bound to pay a certain quantity of  
of

of personal labour, in manuring, cultivating, and saving the crops for their lords; and, in process of time, many of these services, by mutual compact, between the Lord, or owner, and the Slave, or copyhold tenant, were converted into an equivalent pecuniary rent, or what was accepted as such; which, as the country grew more populous, and common labour was cheap, answered the purpose of the lord, or master, as well as the continuation of the personal service. Hence, by the consent of the lords of manors, many *villeins regardent* were enfranchised, with liberty to alienate their copyhold tenements to freemen, who were bound to furnish the same quantity of labour, or its pecuniary equivalent, to their lords, or landlords. And thus, by degrees, personal Slavery, or villenage, has worn out in England; though the occupiers of the villein-tenements are to this day bound to pay the services due from them, either in kind or in money to the (land) lords of the manors.

“ These antient laws were favourable to the escape of *villeins in gross*; for, if they could conceal themselves, from their master’s pursuit, for a year and a day, they became legally free. [See *Deut.* xxiii. 15, 16.]

“ Therefore, notwithstanding the harsh description of the condition of a Slave or Villein, by Bracton, we must acknowledge there was a humane regard paid to them, by the protection given them in the *MAGNA CHARTA*; which puts our British ancestors of that day in a much more amiable light, than the compilers of our Slave-laws will appear in to posterity; if it shall be known to them, that the following laws stood unrepealed in the statute-books of Barbadoes, when the

the majority of the Negroes and Mulattoes in this colony were *natives* of the island, born under the allegiance of the Crown of England, many of them free, and the tenth generation from the first imported Slaves.

“ Barbadoes Laws in Force.

Stat. No. 82, clause 19. “ That if any Slave under punishment by his master, or by his order, shall suffer in *life* or *limb*, no person shall be liable to any fine for the same. But if any man shall wantonly or cruelly kill his own Slave, he shall pay in, to the treasurer, 15 l.\*

“ If he intentionally so kill the Slave of another, beside paying the owner double the value, and 25 l.\* to the public, he shall be bound to his good behaviour, by the next justice of the peace, during the pleasure of the governor and council. And if any one kill another’s Slave by accident, he shall only be liable to the owner’s action at law; but if any one kill a Slave by night, out of the common road, or attempting to steal his provisions, &c. he shall not be accountable for it.”

By stat. No. 148, clause 8. “ No descendants of Negroes shall be admitted as EVIDENCE, in ANY CASE WHATSOEVER, except in the trial of SLAVES.”

“ The inhumanity and immorality of the foregoing laws, are all aggravated by this last; for, setting aside its illegality, in defiance of the charter, which prescribes against any law being valid in this colony *repugnant*

\* These sums are sterling. See Abridgment of Plantation Laws, page 243, and P. C. Report, p. 548. But I apprehend that the clause itself has lately been repealed — W. D.

*to the laws of England*; the disqualifying of all Negro and Mulatto evidence, cuts off all probability of convicting any white felon or murderer, who only takes the precaution of committing his crimes out of the sight of a free white person, against whom no suspicion of Negro descent can be objected.

*Quære* ; Is there any record of any fine, or fines, being paid to the treasurer, under the statute No. 82 ? And how long since ?

I never knew any, said Mr. F. nor is it probable there ever has been any, since the operation of the clause in No. 148 : for as no inquisition is ever made here by the coroner, for the murder of any of the Negro race ; though some have been notoriously murdered here by white people, within every year of my knowledge ; nevertheless such notoriety, without the official activity of a CORONER, can have no legal effect ; and Negroes being no evidence, the greatest length a proprietor usually goes, is to threaten the murderer till he compounds privately with him for the damage.

Yours, &c.

P. X.

No. XI.

## THE SEVENTH LETTER OF P. X.

Mr. W. breaks out, compares Negroes to Baboons, and exalts *ourselves* above all mankind.—Mr. F. asks him how Greece, &c. have sunk into barbarism, and barbarous Britain risen into civilization ?—doubts whether we have yet gotten to the summit of Policy.—By *Charter*, 5 Char. I. Lord Carlisle, as Proprietor, could erect Manors, &c. in Caribbee Islands, or Province of Carloliola.—*Charter*, 15 Char. II. gives like power to Lord Willoughby, Governor

Governor under Crown.—Here is a marked line for governing Slaves, according to reason, humanity and English Law,—by authorizing Proprietors, at their option, to erect Manors, *attaching Slaves to the Soil*, giving them tenements, &c.—Slaves to pay rent in labour, by day or task, for service and land, and to have wages for over-work.—Accounts to be kept by double tallies.—Smaller Proprietors, so chusing, to hold of Manors, as Freeholders.—Slaves governed by summary Manor-courts would be delivered from the caprice of ignorant men and boys.—A capital Plantation has been successfully governed these five years, by Negro-court.—No White Servant allowed to lift his hand against a Negro.—Fixed Laws and Court, or Jury, keep all in order.—Crops more than tripled by this system, besides increasing the stock, &c.—This system would improve securities.—Judgments would have benefit of *Elegit*.—Junior creditors would also come in, and not be defrauded as now.—Estate well handed, should clear 8 per cent. on capital.—Without Negroes, land worth less than nothing, having taxes to pay.—Debtors may be disqualified from enrolling their Negroes, as Copy-holders attached to Land, without consent of judgment creditors.—Committee of Barbadoes Society of Arts, finding difficulties, decline proceeding further on Slave-laws.

SIR,

THE observation of Mr. F. which concluded my last, was so disagreeable to Mr. W. that he could keep silence no longer;—How absurd, said he, is it, to think of putting a species of creatures, very little above baboons in their intellectual capacity, upon a level with ourselves; who by our superior faculties and penetration, have exceeded all the races of human creatures, our predecessors, in the invention of arts and sciences! And who has ever, from all time past, to this hour, I say, who has ever heard of an African Negro inventing any thing?

Your observation, and your question, Sir, replied  
Mr.

Mr. F. can only be parried by putting other questions, rather than directly answered : for instance, How has it happened, that *Ægypt*, *Assyria*, and *Greece*, where science flourished, two, three, and four thousand years ago, are now, comparatively, sunk into ignorance and barbarism ? And how happy was it for my friend W. and myself, that the restless ambition of *Julius Cæsar*, and his successors, by enslaving our *British ancestors*, reclaimed them from their brutal ignorance, not inferior to the present barbarity of *Nigritia* ; whereby, we are now enabled to make such flattering comparisons, in our own favour ! But brilliant as our intellects, and polished as our manners are, I doubt whether we are yet arrived at the summit of morality and policy, in our *jurisprudencce* ; and therefore, as it grows late, if you will permit me, I will read on.

Mr. F. reads : “ The original charter ( the 5th Char. I. ) to the Earl of Carlisle, as lord proprietor of the Caribbee islands, or province of Carliola, empowered him to erect MANORS, and to make *frecholders*, to hold under said MANORS, and to be suitors in the *manor-courts*, to be held twice a year, or oftener ; and to hold and keep within said *manors*, so to be erected, such and so many courts, as to our LAWS OF ENGLAND shall be agreeable.”

“ And after the surrender of Lord Carlisle’s proprietary grant, the *patent* or *charter* ( the 15th of Cha<sup>e</sup> II. ) to *Lord Willoughby*, as the first temporary governor of the Caribbee islands, immediately under the crown, gives authority to the governor, with consent of the majority of the council, to divide said islands, or *plantations*, into MANORS, lordships, or precincts.



“So that here is a line marked out, according to which, both our titles to our property in Slaves, and the mode of governing them, may be rendered agreeable to reason and humanity, and also conformable to the LAWS OF ENGLAND; if a law were enacted, authorizing any planter, *at his option* (being possessed in fee, of not less than                      acres of plantable or productive land; nor less than                      Slaves) to enrol his said land and Slaves, as a MANOR, with so many of his said Slaves as have been born under the allegiance of the Crown of Great Britain, or as have been twenty years in the colony, to be registered as *copy-hold tenants*, within the said *manor*; allotting not less than after the rate of half an acre of plantable and productive land per head, for each adult Slave, as for the *copy-hold tenements* of the parents and their children, either in separate lots, or in *common-field*, after the manner of *common-field lands* in England; with such other special laws as may be found convenient, whereby the Slaves should be *inseparably attached to the land*; and, although without being emancipated, should nevertheless enjoy all the legal rights, such as any Slave or Bond-servant for life heretofore did, since the reign of Edward I. or now doth, or may, of right enjoy, under the allegiance of the Crown, and according to the laws of England, concerning villenage.

“This allotment of land is supposed as sufficient, with industry, to furnish them with provisions and cloaths, for which they should be bound to pay, as a rent, an equivalent in day-labour, or task-work, to their owner, and also an additional number of days-labour, or the equivalent in task-work, as a rent for their personal

sonal services to their master; as he, or his predecessor, had purchased a property in them; after which, (these rents being estimated in current money of the time) their owner should allow them a daily pay in account for their work; which, supposing not more than 260 working days, to be reserved for the service of the master, in a year, should be rated at something more than equivalent to the rents of their copy-holds and of the personal labour; in order to hold out to them an evident and profitable incentive to their industry. And the accounts of labour should be kept, between master and slave, by double tallies; which being more accurate and more intelligible than pen and ink, would prevent all frauds and mistakes.

“And by the same law it should be enacted, that proprietors of smaller parcels of land, might, at *their option*, and with consent of any lord of a neighbouring *manor*, inrol their freeholds, as holden of the said *manor*, and themselves as freeholders and *suitors*, to the courts of the same; thereby to enjoy for themselves and their Slaves the advantages annexed to such an institution.

“This system would necessarily introduce some rational and fixed laws for the government of the copyhold Slaves, by compendious *manor-courts*, either like *courts martial*, or perhaps somewhat resembling the English courts of *pie-powder*, (which, in all public fairs, exist to this day) or partly like both; so that the Slaves would be no longer subject to the wild caprice of passionate or ignorant men, or boys; but to an orderly government of steady and uniform rules, known to all.

“As

“As a proof of what may be done by fixed laws, and a court emergent on all occasions, like that of *pie-powder*, or *court-martial*; a capital plantation of between seven and eight hundred acres (where the stock of Negroes, by the usual irregular and unlimited treatment of the Slaves, were reduced to half the proper number) has been governed, for about five years past, by fixed laws and a Negro-court, with great success. In this plantation, no overseer or white servant is allowed to lift his hand against a Negro, nor can he arbitrarily order a punishment; fixed laws and a court, or jury of their peers, keep all in order, without the ill effect of sudden and intemperate passions.”

I have heard something of this *Sancho Panza* government, said Mr. W. but it seems, that, as these boasted laws cannot persuade the Negroes to as great an exertion of labour, as was obtained under the exploded discipline of the whip and the bastinado, in the hands of white drivers, the plantation, in the mean while, is going to ruin.

I can aver, sir, answered Mr. R. that you have not been well informed; for, within a very few weeks past, I had a sight of the books of that plantation, and my curiosity tempted me (with permission) to extract the following facts from them, viz. From the year 1773, to the year 1779, inclusive, a period of 7 years, by ill management and wasteful œconomy, the stock was so much reduced, that the annual average nett clearance was little more than one and a quarter per cent. on the purchase. In the second period of four years, by the exertion of an honest and able manager, (though with a further reduction of the stock, and including

cluding the loss by the great hurricane) the annual average income was brought to clear a little above two per cent. But, in the third period of three years, from 1784 to 1786 inclusive, since the new mode of governing the Negroes, (beside increasing the stock, and laying out large sums annually, in adding necessary works, and in repairs of the damage by the great hurricane) it has cleared very near  $4\frac{1}{4}$  per cent; that is, its annual average clearance in each of these three periods was in this proportion: for every 100*l.* annually cleared in the first period, the annual average clearance in the second period was 158*l.* 10*s.* and in the third period, was 345*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* These facts are obstinate, Mr. W. But, *si quid novisti rectius istis*, candidly impart it; if not, take this upon my testimony, and permit Mr. F. to read on.

Mr. F. ready: "Under such a legal institution of *manors and copy hold Bond-slaves*, MORTGAGES would stand in the same legal circumstances as they do now; with the advantage of their security growing better by the increase of the plantation labourers, instead of growing worse, by their decrease, under *cruel exertions*.

"JUDGMENT CREDITORS would have execution according to the equitable laws of England, by the *statute of Elegit*, and would be paid according to seniority, from the annual income of improving estates; whereby the junior creditors would come in, in their turn, and be paid to the last shilling; instead of being defrauded and shut out, by the destruction of an estate, for perhaps, a fourth part of its real value; as they frequently are now, to the great discredit of the island. For though in an estate well stocked with Slaves, an acre of land taken generally, and a Negro also taken  
1
generally,

generally, are worth, on an average, at least 50%.\* each acre, or Negro; and though such an estate should generally pay 8 per cent. on its whole value of land and perishable stock; yet if the Negroes are taken away, by the pernicious operation of the Barbadoes statute No. 28, the land becomes thereby worth less than nothing; because, without labourers, it will produce nothing; and yet will be charged annually to the parish rates, till by the annual executions and levies of the church-wardens, it may be gradually exhausted; a case which has frequently happened, and continues to happen, to several small freeholds in this island.

“On the other hand, if our legislators should be of opinion, that good faith requires that judgment creditors should be left in possession of the pernicious power of continuing to ruin the plantations, by stripping them of the Negroes and working cattle, and dismantling the works; it will be very easy to add a clause, whereby no person shall be qualified to enrol his Negroes as copy-holders attached to the land, against whom any judgments are recorded; unless by consent of his judgment creditors.”

Here followed the concluding part of the “Sketch of a Form for a Report,” which has been communicated in my fifth letter.

And at the next meeting of the committee, July 10th 1786: “The committee having given their opinions on the 2d section, THE SLAVE-LAWS, referred to them, and finding difficulties to arise in proceeding farther on that subject, are of opinion that the farther consideration thereof will require much more time for deliberation; and therefore it is the opinion of this

\* 35*l.* 14*s.* 3*d.* sterling.

committee to pass on to the consideration of the 3d section referred to them, namely, Laws concerning Exportation of Cattle, &c."—since which this subject of *Negro laws* has not been resumed. I am, &c.

P. X.

No. XII.

## THE EIGHTH LETTER OF P. X.

Proposed plan, though generally accounted visionary, excites curiosity in some.—Blacks as well as Whites admitted to be human.—Both feel wants, till soil, and use tools.—Free men work, because they must work or starve.—Satisfy their appetite for food, and you abate their appetite for work.—For example, Soldiers.—Disband those lazy Soldiers, and they return to labour.—Feed Slaves, you take away the natural incentive to labour, and you must whip them to make them work.—Make Slaves Copy-holders, according to English Law;—give them land and wages,—they will then feel that they have property, protection, and something like freedom, during good behaviour;—and ninety-nine in hundred, dreading the loss of such things, will behave well.—Depravity owing to bad Laws and examples.—Convicts, in the worst part of England, not one in three hundred.—But alas! how many heavy punishments are there among three hundred Slaves?—It is said that Negroes would rather starve, than work for wages.—The contrary proved by trial.—For  $2\frac{1}{2}d.$  currency a day each, beside usual allowance, fifty Negroes holed twelve acres, in six days, with great ease.—Experiment repeated, with success.—Many who usually pleaded inability offered their services.—More experiments, by task-work, all succeed.—Without the premium, eighteen of the same people did less work than six had done with it, a few days before.—These heterodox experiments attacked by vulgar censure:—The plain answer is, The saving of time, often critical, by premium, is alone worth above double the sum.—Under premium, no crowding to sick-house.—In vulgar mode, Slaves feel only desponding fear, without considering maintenance as a reward.—In task-work, the hope of winning, and the fear of losing, have a double operation on them.

SIR,

THE subject of the conversation concluded in my last epistle, though generally passed over as a *visionary project*, has however excited curiosity in a few candid doubters, to hear what could be said, by its advocates, toward convincing any common understanding, of its practicability. In consequence of which, a meeting of a few friends, among whom Mr. F. a zealous member of the SOCIETY OF ARTS, and myself, were summoned to meet at my friend R's house, last Thursday evening; when, in answer to the several doubts and objections suggested against the practicability of making the Negroes, COPY-HOLD BOND-SLAVES, and against granting them any better conditions, and more *legal protection*, than what they were now permitted to enjoy, by reason of *their brutish nature*, and their aversion to labour, Mr. F. spoke as follows :

I shall not take up your time, in an useless discussion of what may be the specific difference between the capacities of *white men* and *Negroes* : they are both admitted to be of the *human kind* ; and both *species* have all the necessary abilities, of mind and body, suitable to their being *cultivators* of the *soil* which is to feed them ; and both also are endowed with a sense of feeling their natural wants, and of knowing how to supply them, when tools have been put into their hands, after being taught how to use them.

If then, it should be asked, Why do labourers in Europe, who are freemen, work cheerfully, without *whips* or *drivers*, for a daily pay, barely sufficient to feed, clothe, and lodge them? we may readily answer thus,—Because such poor free people, having no *property*, nor other means

means of subsisting than by their personal labour, must either **WORK** or **STARVE**. But let any one take away their *necessities* by providing them with food, clothes, and lodging, and there will be an end of their appetite for labour : no more of it will be obtained from them otherwise than by compulsion, except it be to administer to their animal pleasures. This is clearly exemplified in the manners of enlisted soldiers ; for such men, though formerly inured to labour, generally become indolent, as soon as they are clothed, lodged, and furnished with a certainty of daily pay and provision ; and then, the whip must be used to prevail on some of them to undergo the trifling labour of keeping their arms and their clothes clean. But, disband these same soldiers ; and, in a very short time, for the most part, they will return to the use of the hoe, the spade, or the plough ; and cheerfully labour, ten or twelve hours a day, for less emoluments than they received in their indolent stations, as soldiers.

We **PLANTERS**, by providing our **NATIVE AND NATURALIZED SLAVES** with all the *necessaries* of life, have left them few or no natural wants, and consequently no natural incentives to labour ; and therefore, of course, the **WHIP** must be employed to compel them.

Change the system : make your Negroes **COPY-HOLD BOND-SLAVES**, according to the **LAWS OF OLD ENGLAND** ; give them **LANDS** nearly sufficient to feed and clothe them and their infant children ; charge those lands with a reasonable rent ; allow them a competent time for their cultivation ; encourage them to work for you willingly, by paying them (besides the profits of their rented tenements) a reasonable **PRICE FOR THEIR LABOUR**,



LABOUR, which, as you bought them, you have a right to exact, as exclusively yours.

Under this regulation, they will feel they have a comfortable estate, with a profitable employment, with *property*, PROTECTION by LAW, and *something like freedom*, during their *good behaviour*, with a similar and *certain provision for their posterity*; which advantages at least ninety-nine in the hundred will be cautiously afraid of losing by forfeiture of those comfortable rights, in case of any gross <sup>T</sup>delinquency. For, the depravity of mankind is much more owing to the influence of *iniquitous laws*, and of *bad examples*, than to any defect, or original corruption in human nature. By a very accurate account of convicts in England, it appears that the number of criminals annually condemned to the gallows, to transportation, or temporary confinement, whipping, and hard labour, (even in the most corrupt and most populous part of the kingdom) does not amount to three in a thousand, of all the inhabitants of that district, or, we may say, not to *one in three hundred*!—But, alas! what are the daily and *annual proportions* of heavy punishments in a plantation of *three hundred Slaves*, in this island? and to what cause can the necessity of such punishments be ascribed—but to our errors, or ignorance in the art of governing the labouring class, as we ought to do, by PRUDENT and PROPER LAWS? It has been often said, but without proof, that Negroes, from their indolent and brutish nature, would rather starve, than work for wages in money, or than cultivate a proportion of land sufficient, by its produce, to buy, or to furnish them with food and clothing.

But

But an experiment has been tried which proves the contrary.

A planter offered a premium of two pence half-penny a-day, or a *pistreen* \* per week, with the usual allowance to *holers*, of a dram with molasses, to any twenty-five of his Negroes, men and women, who would undertake to hole for canes, an acre per day, at about  $96\frac{1}{2}$  holes, for each Negro, to the acre. The whole gang were ready to undertake it, but only 50 of the volunteers were accepted, and many among them were those who, on much lighter occasions, had usually pleaded infirmity and inability. But the ground having been moist, they holed 12 acres within six days, with great ease; having had an hour more or less every evening to spare; and the like experiment was repeated with the same success. More experiments, with such premiums, on weeding and deep hoeing, were made by task-work per acre, and all succeeded in like manner; their premiums being all punctually paid them in proportion to their performance. But afterwards, some of the same people being put (without premium) to weed, on a loose cultivated soil, in the common manner, 18 Negroes did not do as much, in a given time, as 6 had performed of the like sort of work, a few days before, with the premium of the two pence half-penny.

But these heterodox experiments did not pass without censure; such as, "If the *proper exertion of the Whip* had been employed, the *same work* might have been as well done for nothing, as for the premium!"

\* A <sup>Spanish</sup> coin worth two bits, or about a shilling sterling.  
-W.D.

However,

However, the plain answer to this censure, is that, by the last experiment, where 18 Negroes under the whip, did not do as much as 6, with the premium; the planter was clearly convinced, that saving time, by doing in *one day*, as much as would otherwise require *three days*, was worth more than double the premium; the timely effects on vegetation being critical. And moreover it was remarkable, that during the operations under the premium, there were no pretended disorders, no crowding to the sick-house. But, according to the vulgar mode of governing Negro slaves, they feel only the desponding fear of punishment, for doing less than they ought; without being sensible that the settled allowance of food and clothing is given, and should be accepted, as a reward for doing well; while, in task-work, the expectation of winning the reward, and the fear of losing it, have a double operation on their minds, to exert their endeavours.

P. X.

### No. XIII.

#### THE NINTH LETTER OF P. X

The vulgar system perhaps the only one practicable 150 years ago.

—Value of Slaves and land must be taken together, they being useless separately.—Expence of present and proposed mode must be compared —Acre of good land in Barbadoes, duly cultivated, produces about 15*l.* curr. o. 10*l.* 14*s.* 3*d.* sterl. per ann.

—Copyhold Slave may reasonably pay 3*l.* curr. of rent.—Estimates.—By present mode, maintenance of 300 Slaves of all ages, costs 1710*l.* curr. or 1221*l.* 8*s.* 7*d.* sterl. per ann.—By proposed mode 128*l.* 15*s.* curr. or 916*l.* 19*s.* 3*d.* sterl.—

Saving 426*l.* 5*s.* curr. or 304*l.* 9*s.* 3*d.* sterl. per ann.—Besides

the

the expence of watchmen, and punctuality, and dispatch — Bond slaves must work for **their own** masters only.—By this method ancient Slaves in England were civilized.

[*Continuation of Mr. F's discourse.*]

Now all that remains for me, is to lay before you a fair estimate of what a gang of Negroes costs us, under the present vulgar system (which, perhaps, was the only one that was practicable 150 years ago, with *an untamed set of savages*) and on the other hand, to exhibit what might be our expence, if we were to convert our present NATIVE and NATURALIZED NEGROES into BOND-SLAVES, with COPYHOLD TENEMENTS, under such LEGAL PROTECTION as the ENGLISH COPYHOLD BOND-SLAVES ENJOYED; they still continuing to be the frechold property of their masters, and unalienably *attached to the land*, unless by *forfeiture* they should lose those *valuable rights*.

In order to which, I shall premise, that every planter in this colony, being obliged to secure a competent number of labouring Slaves for the cultivation of his land, the purchase or value of the land and its labouring Slaves must be taken together, as if they were one incorporated subject; since neither of them could be truly productive or profitable without the other. Therefore we shall only have to consider separately, What may be the present annual expence of maintaining a stock of Slaves, competent to the cultivation of an estate containing in the whole about twice as many acres as Slaves. And then, in the next place, to estimate What might be the expence of maintaining the same number of Slaves, if converted into copyhold Bond-slaves on the same estate, paying a reasonable  
rent

rent for their tenements (the profits and produce whereof may be nearly sufficient to maintain them) and receiving at the same time, beside the profit of their tenements, reasonable wages for their daily labour in the service of their landlord. Let it be also premised, that an acre of good land duly cultivated and planted with all the proper varieties in succession, for crops suited to the soil and situation in this climate, will produce on a *moderate estimation* to the value of 15*l.* curr. [10*l.* 14*s.* 3*d.* sterl.] per annum. And that therefore, a landlord, who shall grant such good plantable and productive land to his *copyhold Bond-slaves*, may reasonably charge them at a rent of 3*l.* or one-fifth per acre of the value of its probable annual produce. And now, in order to form the comparison, let us state, that according to the present mode of governing Negroes, the annual expence to a planter of maintaining 300 Slaves of all ages and sexes, sick or well, able, superannuated, or infants, exclusive of the Negro-tax, but including medicines and medical attendance, cannot be estimated at less than about 5*l.* 14*s.* curr. [4*l.* 1*s.* 5*d.* sterl.] per head, amounting in the whole to 1710*l.* curr. [1221*l.* 8*s.* 7*d.* sterl.]

#### ESTIMATE FOR COPYHOLD BOND-SLAVES.

Then suppose the same 300 Negroes converted into *copyhold Bond-slaves*, with certain copyhold tenements of land at the rate of 3*l.* rent per acre on one hand; and on the other, receiving a reasonable compensation for their services to their landlords, according to their stations, ages, and abilities.

Suppose

Persons.	Acres.		Years wages. Currency.		
			£.	s.	d.
125	62½	Suppose 125 men and women in first gang, including tradesmen, and head-men at 7½d. wages per day for each, for 260 days in the year (48 days, besides Sundays, &c. to be allowed them at sundry times in the year, not all at once; but at seasonable times, and to a few more or less at a time, for cultivating their copyholds of half an acre each Bond-slave)	1015	12	6
75	25	Second gang, (or such as rank with 2d gang) of both sexes, at 5 pence per day each, for 276 days in the year, (32 days, being allowed in like manner, for cultivating their copyholds of one-third of an acre, each; being supposed to be young single persons without children)	431	5	0
45	0	Third gang, or meat pickers, at one penny farthing per day, or a bit per week, for 52 weeks, to be applied by their parents to their maintenance	73	2	6
18	9	Servants about house, garden, stable, dairy, poultry, and hogs, in constant, but light service, with some advantage of the kitchen, or the master's table, and with leisure at proper times to cultivate their tenements of half an acre each, and wages at two bits or 15 pence per week, for 52 weeks	58	10	0
27	0	Children too young to work, to be maintained and clothed by their parents, until they enter the meat picking gang	0	0	0
10	5	Suppose ten superannuated or past labour, entitled to no wages; but to subsist on the profits of their copyhold tenements, in cultivating of which, the charity of the children, or kindred, should assist them; but if any, as suppose four of these, should			

Persons.	Acres.		Years' wages.
			Currency.
			£. s. d.
		be able to do <del>some</del> little offices, such as to be dry nurses, fattening brasts, attending sheep, or calves; then to be allowed wages at 1½ bit per week	- - - 9 15 0
300	101½	Amount of annual wages	1588 5 0
		One hundred and one acres and a half at three pounds per acre, to be deducted from the annual amount of wages	- 304 10 0
		The neat expence of employing the labour of 300 copyhold Bond-slaves	- 1283 15 0
		Which is less than the expence of the same number of Slaves, as now usually clothed and fed from the master's stores, by	- - - - - *426 5 0
		Expence of 300 Slaves at 5 <i>l.</i> 14 <i>s.</i> each, £	1710 0 0

Out of this saving of 426*l.* per annum, the planter may well afford to continue to bear the usual expence of medicines and attendance for his sick Slaves; beside paying their wages when they work. In other respects, the comfort and general happiness of the Negroes, under this new condition, would render them continually anxious to preserve themselves in it, by their good behaviour. And it would soon be found, that, when every Bond-slave should have the care of his crops, growing on his own tenement, and of preserving them when saved, in his own little store-room; the master will be freed from the expence of keeping a number of faithless watchmen, in the vain attempt of defending fields of corn and other provisions, from the plundering, oftentimes, of the worthless gang, whom

\* That is, 304*l.* 9*s.* 3*d.* ster*l.* saved. See in Appendix, Note marked, p. 124.

those

those provisions were intended to feed. Add to this, that hoeing, weeding, holing, &c. when generally paid for by task-work, the cultivation of the estate will be more punctually and expeditiously performed, at the smallest expence. For the Bond-slaves, not permitted to work for any one else than their own master, will take care never to lose their wages, by making *blank days*; lest, by the failure of paying their rent, they should forfeit their tenements, and all these comfortable rights. But why need I expatiate on a plan so plainly beneficial and infallible? in as much as it is the same successful method, by which all the antient Slaves in the mother-country were reclaimed from brutal manners, to civilization.

Here it is, on paper; and every gentleman may make his own observations, objections, or amendments to it. I have, at present, no more to say.

It was then recommended, by all the company, to publish the plan; and I undertook that charge; when the rev. Mr. ——— begged he might have the honour of adding, as a motto to Mr. P's practical discourse,

*"Omne tulit punctum, qui miscuit utile dulci."*

I am, &c.

P. X.

No. XIV.

### THE TENTH LETTER OF P. X.

Doubts and difficulties cleared up.—Mr. W. ready to listen to farther explanations.—But Mr. D. would hear no more of "such an absurd system"—New come Englishman states his doubts—which are obviated.—Now, thrice as much land as necessary, in provisions,—because ill planted, and often stolen.—Saving evident to Accomptants.—But mere saving not the only object.  
—Hope



•Hope of Reward, and Fear of legal Punishment, will probably awaken sense of probity.—Barbarity of Greeks and Romans to Slaves.—To their reputedly uncivilized German Ancestors, English owe humanizing legal gradations of Villenage.—What an honour to the Mother-country to have been the first nation who relinquished Slavery!—What an honour to Barbadoes, the Mother-colony of the W. Indies, to adopt the Mother-country's mode of Slave-government!—Desirable that Trial should be made, under legal authority—but that, while distinction of colour remains, it should not go beyond the rank of Copyhold Bondmen.

SIR,

ABOUT ten days after I gave you the *argument and estimate* of Mr. F. we had another summons to spend an evening at our friend R's house, to clear up the difficulties and doubts which occurred to some of the gentlemen. Mr. W. notwithstanding his former opposition to the plan recommended by Mr. F. was candid enough to attend, with three others of his particular friends; but Mr. D. could not be prevailed upon by him, to hearken any more to what he called "such an absurd system."

After some general discourse, not material to relate, —I must confess, said Mr. H. that, notwithstanding my bias in favour of *freedom*, according to the LAWS and CUSTOMS of my *native country*, there appears to me something paradoxical in Mr. F's plan and estimate, comparing it with your estimated expence of maintaining Slaves in the common way: for example, by Mr. F's estimate, a first gang labourer may earn annually, at a bit per day for 260 days, 8*l.* 2*s.* 6*d.* in cash; and by the average neat value of the produce of his *half acre tenement*, 6*l.* more; together with the chance of his wife having, at least, one child in the  
third

third gang earning 1*l.* 2*s.* 6*d.* making in the whole 15*l.* 5*s.* [or 10*l.* 17*s.* 10½*d.* sterl.] per annum. And that a second gang labourer, without a child, may earn in like manner, 9*l.* 15*s.* or, if she has a child in the third gang, 10*l.* 17*s.* 6*d.* [or 7*l.* 15*s.* 4¼*d.* sterl.] and yet that the average expence, to the proprietor, upon the whole gang of three hundred Slaves, old and young, amounts to no more than 4*l.* 5*s.* 7*d.* [or 3*l.* 1*s.* 1½*d.* sterl.] a head; while, according to the present mode of governing Slaves (which some planters seem to think the best) the average expence per head is stated variously from five to six pounds, without paying any money to the Slave himself; but supplying him with the necessary food, clothing, and working tools, such as hoes and bills, and with medicines and attendance when sick.

But Mr. F. besides paying them in CASH for every day they work on the plantation, makes this apparently great and generous allowance to the LABOURING BOND-SLAVES, by granting about 101½ acres of good land (under a rent of six per cent. interest on its value at 50*l.* [or 35*l.* 14*s.* 3*d.* sterl.] per acre) in TENEMENTS, towards the support of 300 Negroes old and young; whereas from other planters, I understand, that 300 acres of good land would scarcely be sufficient (as planted, and reaped, and stored by the proprietors) to furnish 300 Negroes in families, with their allowance of corn, or ground provisions\*, exclusive of all other expensive allowances of fish, salt, molasses,

\* This W. Indian term has been mistaken for *grinded* provisions. But it means provisions raised on the *ground*, or on the *spot*, in contradistinction to those imported.—W. D.

rum, clothing, &c. Wherefore, I think, there must be some error or miscomputation in one side or the other of these two accounts.

Sir, answered Mr. W. Mr. F. is speaking to *planters*, who (*prejudices apart*) understand him very well. All that we doubt of, is whether our Slaves would immediately be discreet enough to avail themselves fully of the indulgence granted them, under this new mode, by their diligence and œconomy, in cultivating their *tenements*, and in saving their crops.

The truth is, that, although we plant much more ground than should be sufficient to produce provisions to feed our labouring Slaves, yet the Negroes, feeling that they have no direct property in those crops, and that we must buy more to supply them, if those crops fall short, the cultivation is negligently performed by them, and the produce is afterwards stolen by the Negro-watchmen, or their confederates ; so that we seldom reap *a third part* of what should be the natural and probable produce. But if we could depend on their diligence and œconomy, in cultivating rented tenements, and carefully storing their crops, they might undoubtedly be maintained better than they are, and at a much smaller expence than it costs us at present ; not only by our wasting three times as much land as might be necessary for that purpose, but also by our cultivating it with a *reluctant gang*, to our loss.

But, said Mr. H. another observation occurs to me, that wants explanation ; which is, that as no planter doubts the truth of what Mr. F. has advanced, namely, that the annual produce of these *half-acre tenements* should be worth, at a reasonable average, five times as much

much as the rent charged upon them, that is, that *each half acre* would pay the Slave a clear income for his labour on it, of 6*l.* a year; though the quantity of labour spent on it did not amount altogether to above a sixth part of a year; it should follow, that the whole year's labour of *one Slave*, given with as willing a mind, as when employed for his own profit, should be sufficient to cultivate *three acres* to the same advantage; and consequently sufficient to produce to the value of 45*l.* Is this then the case, on every estate of 300 Slaves, where first and second gangs make up about 200 workers? And does every such estate produce to the value of 8 or 9000*l.* gross, every year?

Certainly not, said Mr. W. though such fortunate events may happen in some such estates, under excellent managers, once in 30 or 40 years. But, though I do not object to Mr. F's estimate of the probable profits made by raising provisions, many kinds of which yield three, four, or more, crops in a year, provided there was always a constant contiguous market for them; yet where there is not such a market, such species of cultivation cannot be extended generally to the great plantations, but they must raise *crops* for *exportation*; taking their chance of market prices, which the exporters cannot govern. I must acknowledge also, that under the *present mode of governing Negroes*, the only one which we have as yet generally experienced, I do not think we can possibly expect the same degree of *exertion in their labour*, as if they were to employ it in raising crops for *their own profit*. Therefore I heartily wish to see the experiment completely

pletely made ; for that, and that only, could remove all my doubts.

You have given, said Mr. F. so candid an opinion, that I think your doubts will not continue much longer. I apprehended that the allowance of a daily pay in money, added to the profits of the tenements, might have startled some people, as an extravagant allowance, and more than the maintenance of the Slaves costs us by the old method ; but I trust, that the saving appears too clearly in the estimates, to admit of a dispute with men versed in accounts. However, the *mere saving* was not the only object which pleased the patrons of this system in the society : they knew that after men were hardened and degraded by frequent corporal punishments, their minds were too much debased to refrain from the commission of alluring crimes, merely to save a whipping ; and therefore those gentlemen were of opinion that some certain legal property, and the certain means of increasing it, for the future benefit of themselves, or their children, that is, by giving them the hopes of certain gain on one side, with the fear of being legally punished by pecuniary penalties, for misdemeanours, idleness, or crimes, on the other, would be a means of awakening in these poor, corrupted and dejected Slaves, *a new sense of being honest*, and of acquiring a character of probity, from the apprehension of having something to lose, if they were found to be otherwise.

Here the rev. Mr. — observed, that when we look back into history, we are astonished to see, during the reign, as we may say, of philosophy, the unfeeling barbarity

barbarity of the Greeks and Romans, towards their Slaves : and that it was from the Germans, whom, we have been misled, by a great part of our Roman learning, to consider as uncivilized barbarians ; I say, from those our German or Saxon ancestors, we as Englishmen, derived that wise and excellent mode of humanizing savage Slaves ; by the legal gradations, first of *villeins in gross*, or mere chattels, such as our present Negro-slaves, and secondly, raising them to the state of *villeins regardent*, attached as freehold property to the soil ; and lastly, to the more important state of *copy-hold bondmen*, with *tenements* of land under *certain rents*, and bound to pay them *by their services* !—What an honour was it, to our British ancestors, to have been the first nation in Europe, who, by excelling all their neighbours in humanity, increased the population of our Mother-country, to such a degree, even 200 years ago, as enabled them, without loss, to have relinquished entirely their personal dominion over their copy-hold tenants ; contenting themselves with little more than *suit of court*, and their pecuniary rents alone ! And what an HONOUR will it be to Barbadoes, the MOTHER OF THE BRITISH WEST INDIA COLONIES, if the humane mode of governing Slaves, according to the model of our Mother-country, should now be adopted *here* !

As I have said before, answered Mr. W. I wish heartily to see the experiment tried, by volunteers, under some LEGAL AUTHORITY ; but I hope, while any distinction of colour remains, we shall never carry it farther than to the third degree towards emancipation ;

tion ; that is, as Mr. F. has defined it, to the rank of *copy-hold bondmen* !

We all concluded in this opinion, and soon after broke up. I am, &c.

P. X.

No. XV.

### THE ELEVENTH LETTER OF P. X.

Mr. D. thinks better of proposed plan.—Mr. L. breaks silence by quoting Capt. Gulliver, &c.—Boundaries of Copy-hold lots of land still visible in England.—Economical reasons for proportioning wages of different gangs.—If plantations should be overstocked with Slaves, Proprietors might let them emigrate *gratis*.—Labourers will be wanted in neighbourhood for 200 years.—Refractory or criminal Copy-holders would forfeit tenements, become *Villeins in Gross*, liable to be whipped, sold, or shipped off, *as now*.—In every Manor, succession to Copy-holds to be settled by Laws confining it to Children by Wives within the Manor or Plantation—if no heirs, tenements to revert to Landlord.—Copy-holders to find their own tools.

SIR,

MR. F. and myself went, the beginning of last week, to attend a meeting at the rev. Mr. ——'s house, by particular desire ; where we met several other gentlemen, among whom we were not displeased to find Mr. D. together with his friends L. and W.

In a short time after we entered, Mr. D. with unusual complaisance, addressing himself to Mr. F. said—Your friend C. having explained to me several parts of your humane plan, as copied from the old *English Slave-laws* which, however, from my total ignorance of the obsolete laws of England (as I never had been there, nor had heard any thing of such laws in North America,

America, where I was educated) I could not bring myself immediately to believe, that such laws had ever really existed, except in the *Utopian* schemes of ingenious and fanciful fabulists, such as old PLATO, Sir THOMAS MORE, and the like.

Nor I neither, (said Mr. L. who was generally a silent member, at our former meetings) though I never actually read any of them, except *Gulliver's Travels*, *Jacques Massey*, *Robinson Crusoe*, and *Tristram Shandy*; which last, in my opinion, is the best of them all.

But resumed Mr. D. your friend C. told me, that all those things, which your society have set forth, about *copy-hold Bond-slaves*, are so true, that the dividing marks of their *acre and half-acre shares*, are still as plain to be seen on the ground, all over England, as if they were drawn in black lines upon paper; and that he himself has seven such little *Bond-slave shares*, annexed to a farm, which he inherits from his grandfather; and he also explained to me, that the allowance in your plan, of a bit [ $7\frac{1}{2}d.$  curr. or about  $6d.$  sterl.] per week, to children in the meat picking gang, was intended as an encouragement to the mothers, to be more careful in raising their children, and to put them under early discipline, in this subordinate service, as soon as possible; and that in the next place, the established provision for the second gang, was to make it an invitation both to the parents and their children, to get them advanced into it, as soon as they should be judged fit for handling a hoe; and, in like manner, it was intended, that the superior emoluments of the first gang, should operate as an allurements to the second  
gang



gang to enter it, as soon as they could show themselves capable of deserving it. And he observed, that considering the several operations in the plantation, would be reduced, as much as possible, to *task-work*, by the day, by the hour, and by measure; the fear of being degraded from the first gang, or of paying *pecuniary penalties*, for failing to acquit themselves in their tasks, would have, in all cases, the most desirable effects in favour of the planter.

But two doubts, continued Mr. D. still hang upon my mind: first, supposing this system, of *copy-hold Bond-slaves*, should prove so favourable to the increase of the *Negroes*, as that we might be overstocked in a few years, beyond our power of furnishing lands to feed them, and of finding profitable employment for them; what are we then to do? Or secondly, supposing that after settling them on their *copy-hold shares of land*, and accustoming them besides to *pecuniary payments* for their labour, they should, some how or other, *turn refractory*, under such great indulgence! How should we then be able to bring them back again to our old mode?

In answer to your first question, said Mr. F. I believe no one disputes the advantages that would arise to us, if we were enabled by an increase of our *Negroes*, to cultivate our lands with twice the present quantity of labour, provided those labourers were attached to our interest, as well as their own; by finding that a faithful discharge of their duty, gave them a permanent and *legal title* to their proportioned shares of the soil. But if, in the course of fifty years, we should happily be overstocked; we could then well afford to let our  
super-

supernumeraries emigrate *gratis* ; and there are islands enough in the neighbourhood, where labourers will be wanted for two centuries to come. And to your second question ; you will recollect that the proposition, in the Society's minutes, was, "that in every MANOR, there should be a court *emergent* on all occasions, for trial of delinquencies of all sorts, and that the refractory and criminal *copy-hold Bond-slaves* would forfeit their tenements, and their privileged rank of *vileins regardent*, and be reduced to *villains in gross*, to be subject to arbitrary corporal punishments, to be sold, and to be shipped off, at the pleasure of the owner, as our Negroes are now. So that it does not appear to me, that we run any risk whatever, in making the experiment, by giving such copy-hold tenements to all our well deserving Negroes ; and to all in general, when they appear to be worthy of that favour. In every *manor*, likewise, the mode of succession of the children to the copy-holds of the parents, will be settled by laws ; that is, the shares of the men must go to the children by their wives in the plantation, or to the next of kin by their female relations in the plantation ; for no part of the succession must go out of the plantation, to the issue of any foreign wife ; which restriction will induce the men to have wives in their own plantation. And no Bond-slave must have more than the share of half an acre, by the general laws (great merit may be rewarded by special indulgence) and in case of no such heirs within the plantation, then such tenements, for lack of heirs, fall in to the plantation landlord, or owner of the manor ; to be regranted according to his discretion. So that with these and sundry  
other

other œconomical laws, such as the copy-hold Bond-slaves being bound to find all their own tools, viz. hoes, bills, &c. every probable case to keep their government within just and reasonable bounds, may be provided for.

P. X.

No. XVI.

### THE TWELFTH LETTER OF P. X.

The rev. Mr. — remarks, that, under proposed plan, Clergy may instruct Slaves in Christianity, without incurring sarcasms of sensible Blacks.—Slaves like Epictetus not to be expected, under present laws.—Negroes copy morals of Whites.—Great proportion of good men in Barbadoes;—but Laws founded in ignorance, and sanctioned by custom,—which reconciles the humane to cruelty,—and makes men of learning act like savages.—New Negroes generally honest; but soon become Thieves and Liars,—the fruit of bad laws and customs.—Under good laws, Slaves would be better off than Servants.—Origin of the saying “Service is no inheritance.”—Villeins regardent too precipitately freed.—Hence poor-rate and vagrancy.—*Barbadoes* the Mother-colony, in British W. Indies, should not be the last to reform abuses;—but *should imitate Mother-country*, and be “*a light to lighten the Gentiles.*”

[*Continuation.*]

ALLOW me, said the rev. Mr. —, to observe upon what, I think, might be a most happy consequence of these regulations; namely, that we may then, confidently and efficaciously, undertake to instruct Negro-slaves in the Christian religion, by the institutes of the Catechism, without incurring the sarcastic retort, as given by the old *Negro Christian* at the college, who said, “He could never repeat his *duty towards his neighbour*, when he thought of *white man.*” For,  
though

though such a Slave as EPICTETUS could have said that part of our Catechism with divine sincerity, notwithstanding he served a most unfeeling master, and under the most profligate government that ever existed ; nevertheless, under our present Negro-laws, we are not to expect to find such *luminaries* among our *Barbadian Slaves* ; who, for want of *book-learning*, can only copy their MORALS from the practices of their WHITE SUPERIORS ! This indeed alludes to a subject very delicate to touch upon ; but, as a MORAL PHYSICIAN, my *professional duty* calls upon me to explain myself.

I hope, I am justified in saying, that in this community, we have a great majority of good men, who would not deliberately, or knowingly, commit or countenance the commission of iniquitous actions ; although such iniquities are daily practised, under the cover of laws, seemingly founded in ignorance, and sanctioned by the authority of uncontrouled custom ! But if such things are !—to what cause can our acquiescence be attributed ? Shall we say, that HABIT is capable of reconciling, in some degree, the greatest contrarieties ; and that the mixture of GOOD and EVIL, like that of ACID and ALKALI, after a short contentious fermentation, SUBSIDES and becomes finally a vapid and nauseous NEUTRAL ? That generous minds, corrupted by evil examples, may forget their honesty, that our *humanity* by habitude of feeling unlimited power over and among Slaves, becomes reconciled to *cruelty* and *oppression* ; and that men, even of learned education, under such habitudes, may come by degrees to act like stupid and illiterate savages ? Is it not notorious,

torious, that newly imported Africans, under twenty years old, come here generally honest, faithful, and lovers of truth ? But before they are seven years in the island, is it not twenty to one that they will be thieves, deceitful, and incorrigible liars ? Can this change of principle be imputed to any other causes than to the influence of injudicious laws, and of customs resulting from this ill-assorted mixture of unbounded freedom on one side, and unprotected Slavery on the other ?

Where humane and equitable laws prevail, SLAVE and SERVANT will be almost synonymous terms, distinguishable only by the annexed conditions of *temporary* or *perpetual* ; under which conditions, the last would often be the most happy. For now, in *England*, the *temporary servants* lament proverbially that *service is no inheritance* ; which proverb probably took its rise from the time when the *enfranchised Bond-slaves* had begun to feel themselves *poor freemen*, after the alienation of their *copyhold tenements*. And here, by the way, we may observe, that as much as we commend the policy and humanity of our ancestors, in the institution of copyhold Bond-servants, we cannot avoid remarking their improvidence by being too precipitate in the *enfranchisement* of VILLEINS REGARDENT, and in permitting, for a trifling *fine*, the *alienation* of their *copyholds*, to wealthy or independent freemen ; the evil consequence of which, by the increase of poverty and idleness, is felt at this day in the enormous burden of the poor's rates, and the increase of worthless vagrants all over the kingdom.

But to return to what more immediately concerns ourselves : BARBADOES is, without dispute, the Mother  
of

of all these British colonies in the West ; let us not be the *last among them* to reform, what is now become so obnoxious to the feelings of our Mother country ; let us therefore, without farther delay, follow the steps of our Saxon ancestors, *and be a light to lighten the Gentiles*, to the honour of the country we are sprung from ! This is, and shall be, my repeated exhortation.

This conclusion of the rev. gentleman met the hearty concurrence of all the company ; the conversation took another turn, and we departed. I am, &c.

P. X.

#### NO. XVII.

#### A POSTSCRIPT TO THE LETTERS OF P. X.

Proposed plan now executing on a capital plantation in Barbadoes.

—*Its completion requires legal authority.*—By-laws : 1st. Day's work to be ten hours.—2d. Labourer to be paid for every hour beyond ten, and to forfeit for every hour under ten.—3d Wages of the first gang a bit, or 6*d.* sterl. a day ; of second, 4*d.* sterl.—4th. Labourer sick. or working for himself, to have no wages.—5th. Labourer forfeits two days' wages, for every day's causeless absence from plantation.—6th. Watchmen to have wages, and to pay for what is stolen.—7th. On entering first and second gangs, proprietor finds hoe, but the labourer ever after.—8th. Book-keeper to give out valuable tools, to be returned or paid for.—9th. Holers, &c. to have dram or money at option.—10th. Work to be reduced to task-work.—11th. Proprietor to provide sick-house, with apartments for sexes, and the best medicines.—12th. Offences, disputes, &c. to be settled, as heretofore, by Negro-court.

THE mode of governing Negro-labourers, according to the plan proposed by Mr. F. in the foregoing letters,

ters, is now carrying into execution on a capital plantation, as far as it can be done at present; but to make it complete in all its parts, requires some higher legal or legislative authority, than merely the good intentions of the proprietor. The following is a copy of LOCAL LAWS, as entered in the Court-roll of the tenants and tenements, in the proposed manor of W. situated and being in the parishes of X. Y. and Z \*, in the colony of Barbadoes, 1789.

1st. A day's work must be ten hours actual work; that is, six hours before dinner, and four hours after noon.

2d. When a labourer works more than ten hours for the proprietor, he or she will be allowed a tenth part more of the daily wages, for every hour he or she shall work over and above ten hours, when so required, whether by day or by night. And every labourer must forfeit a tenth part of their daily wages, for every hour they are absent or deficient in their day's work.

3d. Wages of a first gang labourer, for a day of ten hours, one bit †, or thirty farthings [sixpence sterl.]: wages of a second gang labourer, for the same time, two-thirds of a bit, or twenty farthings.

4th. If a labourer, male or female, is absent from

\* Meaning no doubt the parishes of St. John, St. Philip and St. George, in which Mr. Steele's three plantations were situated.  
—W. D.

† When Mr. Steele wrote, a bit would purchase from 3 or 4 to 14 or 16 pints of corn; very sufficient pay, in addition to the profits of the lots of land mentioned at page 126 above. But corn itself would no doubt be a better standard of wages than money.  
—W. D.

the

the work by sickness, or when working by permission in their own ground, as part of the stipulated number of days allowed them for that purpose, they will be allowed no wages during such absence.

5th. But if any labourer or labourers are absent from the plantation work, and cannot prove by good evidence, that they were nevertheless in the plantation (as mentioned in No. 4.) such absentee shall be fined in the value of two days' wages, for each and every working day of such absence out of the plantation.

6th. Watchmen who are employed as such, without other labour, shall be allowed the price of a day's labour, for every 24 hours of watching, or of six days' labour for a whole week ; but they must be strictly accountable, and must pay for any plundering or trespass committed upon the charge under their care, according to a fair estimate of such damage.

7th. When a young person first enters into the second gang, the proprietor will furnish each such person with a proper hoe ; but ever after, while they continue in that gang, they must provide those tools at their own cost.

But when a second gang labourer enters the first gang, the proprietor will make such labourer a gift of a first gang hoe ; and ever after, said first gang labourers must provide such tools at their own expence.

8th. Other tools, such as bills, picks, crows, &c. will be given out, day by day, as occasion may require, and must be carefully returned to the store-keeper or book-keeper ; or paid for by the person or persons who fail to return them.

9th. When labourers are holing for canes, or basket-carriers



carriers are moulding pennis, or carrying out dung to cane-holes, they shall be allowed the usual dram and molasses, or the equivalent in money, from the plantation, at their option.

10th. All sorts of work are, by observation and estimation, to be reduced to equitable task-work.

11th. An ample sick-house, or infirmary, with separate apartments for the sexes, with medicines from Apothecaries' Hall, and medical attendance, are to be provided at the charge of the proprietor.

12th. All delinquencies, offences, disorderly behaviour, disobedience of proprietors', or of his officers' legal orders; disputes or injuries between the Negroes, among themselves, and crimes of any sort not specified in the foregoing laws, will be inquired into, adjudged, sentenced, and executed, as heretofore, by the Negro-court; either by pecuniary fines, or by corporal punishment, or by banishment and forfeiture of delinquent's tenements.

\* \* \* Time and experience may render it necessary to improve these few laws, by additions or amendments.

## No. XVIII.

QUERIES FROM HIS EXCELLENCY GOVERNOR PARRY

ANSWERED BY

[JOSHUA STEELE, Esq.]

A PLANTER OF 1068 ACRES IN THE PARISHES OF ST. JOHN, ST. PHILIP AND ST. GEORGE, IN THE ISLAND OF BARBADOES.

FROM PAPERS\* RECEIVED SINCE THE DATE OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE FOR TRADE [commonly called the Privy Council's Report]

\* This little collection of pieces of evidence having been printed above three months after the Privy Council's Report, in a very thin folio of only thirteen sheets, has, I believe, gone long ago, *ad vicum vendentem thus et odores*. I do not know that it has ever been noticed, or quoted by any one but myself; under the name of the Supplement to the Privy Council's Report. And thus the evidence of Mr. Steele, though far more full, close and explicit than any on the W. Indian Slave-system, has been almost entirely overlooked. It is the more valuable, as having come from a gentleman who was the only witness, except the rev. Mr. Ramsay, who had previously *studied* the subject, for many years, *in the W. Indies*, with a view to submit to Government, or to the Public, the result of his observations and inquiries. That Mr. Steele was the author, appears, among other proofs, from its being said in the last answer but one, that the plantation mentioned by Ligon (Hist. of Barbadoes, p. 22) "now makes part of the land in possession of this respondent." That plantation formerly belonged to Gov. Kendal, and still bears his name. It was for above forty years in the possession of Mr. Steele; and from it he dates his letter to me. —The insertion of his very valuable evidence, will not only contribute to its preservation; but will complete a collection of all his papers on the West Indian Slavery, as far as they are known to me.—W. D.

ON THE SUBJECT OF THE TRADE TO AFRICA, AND  
PARTICULARLY THE TRADE IN SLAVES.

(Ordered to be printed, 24th June 1789.)

FIRST SET OF QUERIES.

Master's power undefined by Law, unlimited in Practice,—supported by colonial statutes repugnant to Laws of England.—Negroes have no legal protection; because their evidence not taken against Whites,—arbitrarily corrected by Masters, Overseers, and Underlings,—corrected by Magistrates, as far as thirty-nine lashes,—tried for capital crimes, by two justices, and three freeholders.—Contemptible penalties for Murdering them always evaded.—Murders and cruelties often committed on them;—but respondent never knew punishment follow.—No Law for feeding Slaves; but some allow them food and land,—others, part of their time.—They are sufficiently lodged.—The Law for clothing them ill observed.—Feeding and clothing a Slave, about 5*l.* 14*s.* curr. or 4*l.* 1*s.* 5*d.* sterl. a year.—Holing per acre, double the price of day-labour.—Slaves have Sunday, and occasionally Sat. afternoon, to work on their bits of land.—Laws deny them instruction,—three Laws prohibit their hearing Quakers.—Negroes not subject to peculiar diseases.—Diet too generally vegetable for labourers—too little salt and fish (often bad) cause worms and dirt-eating.—Law recites that some Slaves are ill fed,—ordains, *after* a criminal Slave is hanged, an inquiry whether he was properly fed!—Both Whites and Blacks apt to drink too much rum.—Interest in some, operates as humanity in others.—Doctors paid 5*s.* curr. or 3*s.* 7*d.* sterl. a year, per Negro.—Some Planters import the best medicines,—Slaves past labour often turned adrift.—Negroes live as long as Whites.—Instances of their longevity—Climate salubrious.—Negresses generally decent in contubernal connections,—not men: they imitate White servants,—whose lasciviousness, with severity, bad fare, &c. impede natural increase.—Domestic Slaves, and Field-slaves of Overseers, Ten-acre-men, &c. generally prolific;—but not Field-slaves on estates of Absentees, and why.—Instances of decrease,—and of increase,  
by

by taking whips from White servants, &c.—Hence produce tripled—Baptism of Negroes discouraged.—Barbadoes College was very beneficial; but has been long suspended.—Its estate very valuable.—No Missionaries sent to Barbadoes.—Before Negroes can be instructed, bad Laws must be abrogated; for they imitate base Whites.—Some Negroes, both Free and Slaves, are Christians, and many of great probity,—believe in God, and Future State.—Iniquitous Laws destroy their morals.—Proportion of sexes.—Prices of men and women.—Hurricanes have fertilized soil.—New Negroes of little use, till 2, 3 or more years' seasoning.—As Negroes have decreased, so have crops.—Barbadoes chiefly produces Sugar, Cotton, and Provisions.—Mode of cultivating Canes and Cotton.—Crops from three thousand to nine hundred  $\frac{1}{2}$  Sugar per acre.—On eighty acres, the first may clean 3200*l* curr. or 2285*l*. 14*s* 3*d* ster*l*. the second will lose.—Holing, for 7 or 8 months yearly, very laborious,—also dunging, under the whip,—subject them to diseases.—In crop, more labour, but more food.—W. Indies might be cultivated by Negroes, gradually freed and paid wages;—also by Whites, not spoiled by supremacy over Blacks, nor by debauchery.—Cotton wants hardly one-sixth of the labour for Canes,—wants little manure—may be dunged with wheel-barrow, which could not go over cane-holes.—Oxen used for manure and draught,—also, horses, but seldom now, for want of American grain.—Cattle-labour might be extended,—would much abridge human labour,—but men bigoted to old customs.—Planting Canes with plough, would save from 43 to 50*s*. ster*l*. per acre for hand-holing.—Hoe-plough would weed better than hand-hoe.—Dung might then be put out with wheel-barrow,—and not on Slaves' heads,—which they justly abhor, as causing ruptures.

**QUERY 1.** What is the legal\*power which Masters have over their Slaves in Barbadoes?—*Answer 1.* The general power which a Master exercises, and permits to be exercised over his Slaves, is rather by implication (from Slaves being bought as chattels, in the same manner as horses, or other beasts) than by any positive

law defining what the power of a master shall be, in this island ; but by practice it appears to be unlimited, and that practice is supported indirectly by statutes made in the colony, repugnant to the laws of England. —And first, by stat. No. 82, clause 19th. “ If any Slave, under punishment by his Master, or his order, shall suffer in life or member, no person shall be liable to any fine for the same.” Hereby an unlimited power of maiming or killing is frequently exercised by white servants, who are always understood \* as acting under orders.

Q. 2. What is the protection granted by law to Slaves in Barbadoes?—A. 2. Effectually none; for in stat. No. 148, intituled, “ An Act to keep inviolate and preserve the freedom of Elections,” clause 8th seems to step a little out of its way to declare that “no person whatsoever shall be admitted an evidence, in any case whatsoever, whose original extraction shall be proved to have been from a Negro, except only on the trial of Negroes, or other Slaves :” whereby the Slave is not only unprotected from the injuries he may suffer from his master, or the white servants under his master, but is also exposed to all cruelties, frauds, robbery, or murder, which he may suffer from any other white ruffian, who commits the crime only in the presence of Negroes, or their descendants, when there is no white evidence in sight; Negroes or their descendants, whether *free* or *Slaves*, being evidence in no case whatsoever, against white men.

\* That is, “ understood ” by the white servants *themselves*, or according to *their* construction of the law. See pages 49 and 50 foregoing.—W. D.

Q. 3. For

Q. 3. For what offences are they subject to their master's correction ; for what are they amenable to the established jurisdiction of the island ; and in what manner are they tried ?—A. 3. Liable to their master's correction, for every thing for which the master, or the overseer, or inferior white servants, as his representatives, may think proper to punish them ; and for all offences against any white person, who lays his complaint before a magistrate, against which accusation (whether true or false) the Slave, without white evidence, can make no defence, the magistrate, at his discretion, can order him thirty-nine lashes by the constable, with a heavy thong-whip, which is more than sufficient, in many constitutions, to send him out of the world with a *locked jaw*, a convulsion commonly excited by great pain, in this climate.—For theft, murder, or wounding, if Slaves are publicly accused, they are tried by stat. 82, clause 12th, viz. “ When any heinous crimes, as murder, burglary, rape, burning of houses or canes, and stealing, wilfully killing or maiming of cattle, of or above the value of twelve pence, or the like, is committed or attempted by a Slave, the criminal being apprehended, or brought before a justice, shall be sent to gaol; or security taken for his forth-coming ; and such justice shall, as soon as conveniently may be, join with him the next justice, and they shall, by their precept, summon three able freeholders, nearest the place where the fact was committed ; and these five persons shall hear and examine all evidence, &c. the freeholders being first sworn by the justices ; and if upon proof, or violent circumstances, they find the Slave guilty, they shall

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give

give sentence of death; and the said justices shall forthwith, by their warrant, cause execution to be done upon such Slave, by some Negro to be pressed for that purpose by any constable."

Q. 4. To what penalties are their masters, or those who act under them, subject, if they transgress the laws made for the protection of Negro-slaves, or in any respect exercise acts of cruelty towards them; and to what court are they, in such cases, amenable?—

A. 4. The latter part of clause 19th, in stat. 82, above quoted, says, "But if any man shall wantonly or cruelly kill his own Slave, he shall pay into the treasury fifteen pounds, [sterling] &c. recoverable in any court of record." But these contemptible penalties are, in all cases, evaded by the law which makes Negroes "Evidence in no case whatsoever, against any white person whatsoever." Murders, and other cruelties, are frequently committed on Negroes or Mulattoes; but no prosecution on that account has been heard of, during eight years of the residence of this respondent.

Q. 5. Are Negro-slaves fed at their master's expence, or by their own labour; and, when fed by their masters, with what are they fed, and in what quantities?—A. 5. There is no law in Barbadoes directing a master to feed his Slave, and consequently no law directing how and with what species, or in what quantity, they shall be allowed; nor is there any law to compel or direct any allowance of land to the Slave, or any time legally reserved for the Slave to cultivate a bit of land, if such land were allowed him; but it is, however, customary in almost all plantations, to allow them some vegetable food, such as Guinea or Indian corn,

corn, from six to twelve pints per week, sometimes yams, eddoes, pigeon-peas, plantains, &c. and three or four times in the year, some salt fish or herrings, at the will of the master; and also customary to allow them Sundays, Christmas, and Good Friday, and a day after each of the three great festivals, Christmas, Easter, and Whitsunday; at which times they may cultivate such bits of ground as most masters of plantations, at their pleasure, allow them, for and towards their maintenance; but as these allowances are neither sanctioned by positive laws, nor enforced by general custom, so it happens, that many proprietors of Slaves, some with land, and some without an acre, neither feed, nor clothe, ~~nor~~ allow them any thing, except a portion of their time, to help themselves as they can, either by plunder, or by working on Sundays and holidays, for any one that will pay them; though in plantations, and especially in the larger ones, it is usual to allow each adult Negro a bit of ground, from four to ten perches each, and sometimes up to a quarter of an acre; but such generosity is rare, except in the larger plantations that are understocked with Slaves, and where the good sense of a resident owner directs his humanity.

Q. 6. Are they clothed, lodged, and secured against the inclemencies of the seasons?—State the law and the practice.—A. 6. There is no law for lodging them; but by voluntary custom, the masters generally allow them to build little cottages for that purpose, and give them some assistance with materials; so that, upon the whole, they are sufficiently lodged in plantations. In stat. No. 82, clause 6th, it is declared “That all Slaves shall have clothes once a year, that  
is,



is, drawers and caps for the men, and petticoats and caps for the women, upon pain of forfeiting five shillings for each Slave not clothed, one-third to the informer and the remainder to the poor of the parish." But it is notorious that many small planters, and Slave owners, without land, as well as some greater proprietors, seldom, and some never, give their Slaves any clothing; while, for the most part, in the greater plantations, they are regularly clothed (three or four times more in value than as prescribed by the law) yet by the operation of the disqualifying clause, in the election statute above cited, in Ans. 2, no Slave can convict his master, or the overseer, of this offence, or of any other; and, without the evidence of the Slave, no other person can prove the negative, namely, that the master did not clothe him, or allow him some equivalent for that purpose.

Q. 7. What is the annual expence of the maintenance of a Negro man, woman, and child, at different ages respectively? Have they any portions of land assigned to them for the foregoing purpose?—State the law and the practice.—A. 7. Without going into a tedious minuteness in distinguishing ages and sizes, we hope it may be sufficient to answer this query, by saying that the feeding and clothing, &c. of Negroes, at an average, men, women, and children, cannot be less (to a proprietor who does properly and economically feed, clothe, and allow medicinal care and assistance when they want it) than three pence three farthings a head per day, or about five pounds fourteen shillings [4*l.* 1*s.* 5*d.* sterl.] per annum; but it is notorious, from common fame, as aforesaid, that many proprietors do  
not

not give them any certain or regular and sufficient allowance of food and clothing ; but they are usually allowed some small portions of land. (See Answer 5.)

*Q.* 8. Are many Negroes usually let out to hire ; in what numbers, and on what conditions ?—*A.* 8. Many people who have little or no land, and yet are possessed of a number of Slaves, more than their land can employ or maintain, most usually hire out their gangs to hole land for canes, in plantations understocked with Slaves, at a price which, by the general decrease of Slaves in sugar plantations, is more than double the ordinary price of day-labour. For the usual price by the day, is from seven pence half-penny to ten pence, [curr.] with the ordinary allowance of food, *i. e.* from a pint and a half to two pints of corn, computed at a penny per pint, and sometimes (according to their work) a dram with melasses, which makes the average hire in money and in food, amount to from eleven pence to thirteen pence half-penny per day. But a number of Slaves, at a medium between twenty-five and thirty-two Negroes, that is, twenty-eight and a half Negroes, are fully sufficient to hole for an acre of canes in one day, at a medium of  $4\frac{1}{4}$  feet square, or about  $2,411\frac{6}{8}$  holes per statute acre ; consequently the Negroes hired to hole at sixty shillings [ $42s. 10\frac{1}{4}d.$  sterl.] per acre, earn for their owner [ $2s. 1\frac{1}{4}d.$  curr. each, or] more than double the medium price of day-labour, including the douceur of a dram of rum, and melasses every day, worth about three halfpence more than the medium.

*Q.* 9. Are any days, or hours in days, set apart in which

which the Slaves may labour for themselves?—State the law and the practice.—*A.* 9. The law is silent on this head; but the labouring plantation Slaves are customarily indulged to dispose of themselves on Sundays, or a great part of Sunday, provided they be not stationed as watchmen, or are cattle-keepers; and in planting time, they are occasionally indulged with Saturday afternoon to plant their own bit of ground. But as the laws are very peremptory in preventing them from being perverted, by being instructed in moral or religious duties, since there are no less than three statutes (No. 64, 69, and 71) to prevent their going to Quaker's meetings, or hearing their discourses; and, as these laws continue in force, therefore they can legally do nothing else on Sundays, but either to sleep or to work; their playing and dancing on Sundays being equally forbidden.

*Note upon the several Answers, 5, 6, 7, and 9.*—Barbadoes stat. No. 82, clause 15, provides that, after a Negro slave is hanged for any crime, the sum of 25*l.* [sterl.] and no more, shall be levied on the country, to pay the damages to the person robbed by such Negro, and the overplus, if any be, to the owner of the Slave so executed: and clause 16th recites: "But in regard there are some masters and owners of Negroes, who do not make sufficient conscience of providing what is necessary for their Negroes and other Slaves, or allowing them time to plant or provide for themselves, for which cause such Negroes are necessitated to commit crimes contrary to this law, that therefore such owners whose neglect of their Slaves make them in some measure guilty of their crimes, may not be countenanced therein at the charge of the public," enacted, &c. to inquire if such Slave was properly provided with necessaries, &c. if not, to pay no part of the 25*l.* to the owner, &c.

It is worthy of observation, that this inquiry is not to be made till after the Slave is hanged.

Q. 10. Have

Q. 10. Have they any portions of land assigned them for the foregoing purpose?—A. 10. There is no law for this purpose; but the practice in most plantations is as stated in Answer No. 5.

Q. 11. Are they subject to any peculiar diseases to which white inhabitants, or free Negroes, are not subject? and if they are so subject, assign the cause.—

A. 11. It is not observed that the Slaves are subject to any peculiar disease, to which, under the like circumstances of poverty and oppression, or of dissoluteness and intemperance, white people, and free Negroes and Mulattoes, are not equally subject. Their diet, too generally vegetable for labouring Slaves, with too scanty an allowance of salt, and only casually relieved by ordinary salt-fish, or perhaps half putrid herrings (since the loss of the American trade) prones all children to breed worms, and thence to become *dirt-eaters*, even up to manhood, or to generate scorbutic and leprous disorders. Among adult people (both white and black, free or Slaves) the too frequent use of rum subjects them equally to jaundice, dropsy, and death.

Q. 12. What care is taken of them in sickness? Are there any laws or regulations for that purpose?—

A. 12. In some owners, their interest in preserving the lives of such Slaves as are profitable, operates to the same end as humanity does in others; and though there is no law to direct or enforce the care of the sick, it is the general practice in plantations to give a standing salary (as far as five shillings [about 3*s.* 7*d.* sterl.] a head per Negro) to some medical person, apothecary, or practitioner, to supply medicines and attendance

ance annually. And some others, perhaps more provident, give a salary for daily attendance, and import at their own charge, an assortment of all the necessary medicines from Apothecaries' Hall, to prevent Negroes being lost from want of the best or more expensive remedies.

Q. 13. What provision is made for them when old or disabled; and are their masters obliged, in such cases, to maintain them?—A. 13. It has been set forth, in Answers No. 5 and 8, that some people have Negroes without land to maintain them, depending on their being hired to work in plantations that are understocked, or to persons who will maintain them. We must here observe, that in such cases, it too frequently happens, when the Slaves of such people are past their labour, they are abandoned by their owners, both to want and to disease, without relief or remedy; as the law affords none \*, or if it did, while the Negro is no evidence, in any case whatsoever, against white persons, such a law would be nugatory.

Q. 14. What is the general period of their lives; is it of equal duration with that of the white inhabitants or free Negroes?—A. 14. Under similar circumstances and equal treatment, we are of opinion that the general period of their lives is at least of equal duration with that of the white inhabitants or free Negroes.—In the plantation where this Ans. is written, there are now living in different families, three and some four generations, up to 70, 80, and 90 years old, and upwards. The oldest, a Mulatto of ninety-seven years old, born in the first year of Governor

\* But see P. C. Report, p. 548, and in Appendix, Note marked page 154.

Kendal's government, is still in the enjoyment of his memory, and all his faculties. A Negro in a contiguous plantation, was a watchman there eighty years past, and is still an able man ; and though there are of these different generations, the several gradations of men, women, old, middle-aged, youths, and infants, nevertheless by hard usage, we have evidence that 50 per cent. of the stock has been sunk in the course of forty years, preceding the year 1784. And, although the climate is remarkably salutary, both to black and white, under equal treatment, the probability seems to be, that it should be more suitable to black labourers in general ; and yet white labourers are found to bear the hardest labour that is necessary, without any inconvenience, until they destroy their constitutions by excesses of rum-drinking and venery.

Q. 15. What is the practice respecting the marriage of Negro slaves, and what are the regulations concerning it ?—A. 15. There are no regulations, but such as they make according to their own customs. Their contubernal connections are unlimited as to number and local situations, formed and broken off again at pleasure ; but the first wife, if still in friendship and confidence of the husband, continues to govern the household, though his appetite may be shared to one, two, or three more.

The women however have, in general, a sense of decency and decorum in their fidelity, under this voluntary connection. The men have none : they follow the examples of the white servants, who are their immediate and visible masters. To their loose amours many of them are sacrificed. Both sexes are frequently travelling

travelling all night, going to or returning from a distant connection, in order, without sleep, to be in due time to go through a hard day's labour, after their nocturnal adventures.

*Q. 16.* Can any cause be assigned which impedes the natural increase of Negro slaves?—*A. 16.* The answer to the foregoing query points out one leading cause; the lascivious abuse of authority in white servants, over the immature and unprotected females, is another; and after these, severe punishments, hard fare as to diet, clothing, and want of due care when sick, are the most probable causes of that impediment.

*Q. 17.* Are many children born of Negro slaves; and in what proportion are they reared?—*A. 17.* The female Slaves brought up as House-negroes are generally very productive, and so also are those brought up to work in the field, when they are the property of overseers, of militia-tenants, or of small freeholders of ten acres, or under. But in plantations belonging to Absentees, while the Overseer's Negroes, employed on hire in the same plantation (though for the most part in and about the business of the house) are generally increasing, those of the Absent Owner, being all turned into the field to work, are most generally decreasing; and that rather by real or imaginary ill usage, than by a fair proportion of hard labour. For whether the Overseers are evidently partial to their own Slaves or not, the Plantation Slaves most commonly are jealous on that account; and under that opinion, are subject to pine away and die. The proportion of children born on a plantation, and in what proportion reared, may be gathered from the following facts. On two plantations

plantations well stocked with Negroes, the Overseers were allowed to bring on a few of their own Negroes for hire; on the specious pretence of making the work easier to the Plantation Slaves. In forty years, under this mode of management, the plantation stock had decreased by one half, while the overseers' gangs were increased by births, sufficient to stock little estates for themselves. — On a plantation of 288 Slaves, in June 1780, namely, 90 men, 82 women, 56 boys, and 60 girls, by the exertions of an able and honest manager, there were only 15 births, and no less than 57 deaths, in three years and three months. An alteration was made in the mode of Governing the Slaves: the Whips were taken from all the White Servants, all arbitrary punishments were abolished, and all offences were tried, and sentence passed, by a Negro court. In four years and three months, under this change of government, there were 44 births, and only 41 deaths, of which ten deaths were of superannuated men and women, and past labour, some above 80 years old. But, in the same interval, the annual neat clearance of the estate was above three times more than it had been for ten years before.

Q. 18. Are the children of Negroes subject to any diseases to which the children of white inhabitants or free Negroes are not equally subject? And if they are, to what causes is it to be imputed?—A. 18. It does not appear that the children of Slaves are exposed to any diseases different from those of free Negroes, except what may arise from less care, or worse food, in plantations where the government is bad; and as to such disorders as yaws and leprosy, suspected to be hereditary



hereditary in Negroes, it requires more observation and experience than we have to decide, whether the white people are exempt from the same diseases or not.

Q. 19. Are Negroes or their children in general baptized?—A. 19. In general they are not; some few, and very few are; but the practice of it is generally discouraged by the white people, for which we could never hear a candid or intelligible reason.

Q. 20. What religious institutions are there for their benefit in each of the islands?—A. 20. There does not appear to be any in Barbadoes. It has been a vulgar opinion, that the fine estate annexed to Codrington College, in this island, intrusted to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, had been committed to that venerable Body for some religious or good purpose, applicable to these islands; and, some years ago, there was a seminary for the education of youth in grammatical and mathematical learning, established there, and supported by the estate, which is a very valuable one; and much benefit to the then rising generation was derived from it. But it has been for many years suspended; a great loss to the youth of all the British Caribbee Islands.

Q. 21. Are any Missionaries sent from England for their instruction, and what has been their success? If unsuccessful, to what cause is it to be attributed?—

A. 21. We know of no Missionaries having been sent here from England, unless the masters and teachers of the late College, and the Catechist (the only one whose appointment is said to be still continued there) were intended to be considered as Missionaries. But before any kind of religious or moral education can be offered

to

to the Negroes, to any effectual good end, those immoral and impolitic laws of this colony, which give a legal cover and encouragement to the most atrocious crimes that white people may commit, must be abrogated; for the Negroes, observing the immoral lives and actions of the white people, think they have a natural right to imitate their baseness, and to retaliate by all that lying and stealing can enable them to do.

Q. 22. Are the missionaries more successful in the instruction and conversion of the free Negroes than in the instruction and conversion of the Slaves; and to what causes is any difference in this respect to be imputed?—A. 22. No missionaries of the Church of England having been here, what can be said of their success? There are however some Negroes, both Slaves and free, who are Christians, and many of great truth and probity; but they owe their instruction to the humanity of their particular owners, and not to any professed missionaries. There are also many Negroes, who, from the lights of nature, are honest and of moral principles and practices, who believe in a Supreme Being, in the survivance of their spiritual part, and in the expectation of future rewards and punishments. The universality of these three points of faith are demonstrated by their funeral rites, and their anniversary celebrations of them to departed friends. The reason why there are not more Negroes, either Slaves or free, of good principles, arises from the immorality, iniquity, and inhumanity of the laws, as noticed in the foregoing answer, (Ans. 21.)

Q. 23. With respect to Negro-slaves and free Negroes, what is the proportion between males and females?

females?—*A.* 23. We have no accurate account of the numbers and proportions of the sexes among the free Negroes: in plantation Slaves we are accurate. The following numbers and proportions are taken from two plantations only divided by a gully, and between them the males and females are nearly balanced, as appears from the following account :

On the two plantations the whole number is 346;								
on one of which, the proportion of males and females of all ages, old and young taken together,							Mal.	Fem.
are	-	-	-	-	-	-	117	133
On the other	-	-	-	-	-	-	54	42
							171	175
Proportion exactly							57	to 58½

But there are about ten women in these two plantations, grandmothers and great grandmothers, who have been many years past child-bearing; and not three of the men past the sense of a young wife.

*Q.* 24. What is the average value of a country-born Negro man and woman, and what the average value of an imported man and woman?—*A.* 24. The average value of the African born man and woman lately imported, has been within this year above 50*l.* [curr.] and the island-born man and woman above 90*l.*—We say above 50*l.* and above 90*l.* because we have not information full enough to make an accurate average.

*Q.* 25. Has the produce of each of the islands increased in proportion to the increased number of Negro-slaves; and, if it has not so increased, what reason is to be assigned for it?—*A.* 25. We in Barbadoes can only say that a happy change in our seasons, since the frequency

frequency of hurricanes between the tropics, has made the land more productive; but the small number of imported African Slaves recently brought here and retained on plantations, can have no immediate influence on our crops, till they are gradually (in two, or three, or more years time) instructed and induced to assist in cultivation. But we can with more accuracy answer the reverse of this question, by saying that the diminution of our produce from sugar plantations, certainly corresponded with the decrease of our working Negroes, in all the variety of good or bad seasons.

Q. 26. What number of acres has been appropriated to the culture of sugar, cotton, coffee, cacao, ground provisions, &c. and what has in each year, been the produce thereof respectively? —A. 26. The principal object of the planters in this island having been the cultivation of the cane, and manufacturing sugar and rum; and in subserviency to that, and also in support of their great population, the second object of their attention was raising cattle, corn, and provisions of all kinds, and among the small freeholders, raising a little cotton intermixed with corn; so that in general little or no attention was given to the culture of coffee or cacao for sale, the land and labour being chiefly employed in the plantations for sugar. But, within three or four years past, several sugar planters, from the decrease of their Negroes, the increased duty, freight, and other expences on their sugar, and the extravagant price of lumber, salt-fish, &c. from America, and of other necessaries, have divided their lands and labour between sugar and cotton. The quantity  
M employed

employed in sugar, including provision ground and pasture, is about 50,000 acres; and the quantity in raising cotton, including corn and other provisions, about 30,000 acres. The latter part of the above question can only be answered from the custom-house.

Q. 27. What is the mode of cultivating and preparing the ground for sugar, cotton, &c.?—A. 27. In this island, the cultivator expects only one crop of first crop canes from the same acre in three years, except in a very few instances of extraordinary soil and high cultivation. The first year is employed in holing the land, and making manure by feeding ox cattle on temporary pens on the field, made up of mould, cane trash, green shrubs, or bushes, which in the heat and moisture of this climate, are generally rotted into dung in about six months. During the time of making the manure, the holes are dug by hand-hoes in squares from about 1800 to 2700 in an acre, divided from each other by banks and distances (of the unmoved earth) of about eight to ten inches thick, to prevent the soil from being washed away by torrents of rain on sloping grounds; in which holes, at or about the end of the year, the canes are planted with about 80 lb weight of dung to each hole, carried in baskets on the heads of the Slaves. The annual-planted canes continue growing from 15 to 18 months, and the reaping, manufacturing, and shipping the crop, completes the third year. Cotton, in preparation, planting, growing, and reaping, occupies the ground about 8 or 9 months; or it may stand from year to year in the same ground for annual crops. Both canes and cotton require frequent

frequent weedings during the times of their growth ; that is, the canes about eight months, and the cotton about four months' weeding.

Q. 28. What soil is most favourable for each, and how far is the soil capable of improvement by manure?

—A. 28. In general, the black, strong, and deep soil in Barbadoes, for canes, and the lighter and deep for cotton ; though its horizontal roots run very near the surface, and will not thrive if planted deep, or if moulded up round the trees. But both canes and cotton are found to yield very well in a great variety of soils that are rich. Both occasionally require the assistance of manure, for the most part.

Q. 29. What difference is there, in the produce per acre of different plantations, in the same year, when not exposed to any extraordinary accidents?—A. 29. There may be the difference of making 3,000 lb of sugar, or only 900 lb per acre ; that is, he who reaps about 80 acres, of 3,000 lb to the acre, will probably clear about 3,200*l.* [nearly 2,285*l.* 15*s.* sterl.] and he who only reaps 900 lb per acre, will certainly be considerably out of pocket, as the expences will exceed his income.

Q. 30. By what causes are crops on different parts of the same island particularly affected?—A. 30. By too much rains, by excessive droughts, or blast, or worms, or other insects, or by bad planting, neglect of manure, neglect of weeding, and by injudicious reaping ; that is, sometimes too soon before the canes are ripe, and sometimes by letting them stand till they are rotten from over ripeness ; and lastly, by ill management in manufacturing it into bad sugar, or by waste.

Q. 31. Does the quantity of labour, which it is necessary

cessary to require from the Negroes, vary materially in different parts of the year, as it does here in harvest time, &c.; and is there any period at which the increased labour produces any particular effect on the health of the Negroes?—*A.* 31. Holing for canes, from the beginning of the year, for seven or eight months, carrying out dung 80 lb weight in baskets, on the heads of the Negroes, towards the end of the year, which they are compelled (under the whip) to run with for expedition, from the dung heaps separately to every hole in the field, and planting canes and corn always in wet weather, are very laborious, and subject them to colds, fevers, and ruptures. In the crop time, more hours of continued hard labour are required than at any other time; but it is rendered wholesome, by having more variety of agreeable food, and by their sucking canes during the whole operations attending it, for four, five, or six months; and in this wholesome and pleasant regale, they are computed to suck or to sell, by stealth, in junks [or short pieces] about a twelfth part of the raw canes, in all the greater plantations.

*Q.* 32. Would it be possible to cultivate to advantage the West India islands by the labour of Europeans, or of free Negroes?—*Q.* 33. Could an European constitution subsist in such a climate, under the labour necessary for cultivating a West India plantation?—*A.* *A.* 32 and 33. It would be very possible to cultivate canes by Negroes gradually rendered free, and when taught, by the experience of being paid in money, that they received a visible and adequate reward for their labour, which under their present condition, they are not

not sensible of. And Europeans, inured to the common labour of digging and carrying burdens, whose pride was not to be excited and inflated by seeing a condition of men legally unprotected, and too much below them, might also cultivate these lands very well; especially for cotton, the labour of which bears no comparison with that required for canes. Or, if we were to attempt a comparison, we should say the quantity and degree of the labour for cotton are scarcely one to six of what is required for canes; for cotton requires little preparation, no holes, only to skin off the surface, and but little manure; which, without loading the heads of the Slaves, may be carried to every part of the cotton ground in wheel-barrows; which, over and through cane-holes, is impracticable. The constitution of the human body, when brought up to hard labour, soon accommodates itself to this climate, by opening the pores to an easy perspiration; but men of debauched habits, either of mind or body, would seldom live to a second year, where rum and other animal pleasures are so cheap, as that death would be less disgusting to them than regularity and labour.

Q. 34. Is the labour of cattle, and of what species, and in what proportion, used in the cultivation of a West India plantation?—A. 34. Bulls and oxen are most generally used for making manure on the penins, and for draught most generally; some horse-teams are likewise used, but not near so many as formerly, as the price of corn, since the interruption of free trade with North America, has rendered horse-keeping too dear to support them; notwithstanding the great utility of them in carrying down the crops, and bringing up supplies



supplies to the plantations with ease and expedition, and likewise the superior advantage of their manure. But our working horned cattle are not fed with grain.

**Q. 35.** Could the quantity of such cattle be increased, and could their labour be substituted for that of Slaves, in a greater extent than it is at present?—**A. 35.** Undoubtedly it could, if it was only in the article of weeding and moulding up Guinea corn, a most profitable plant in this island, as its leaves feed bulls, oxen, cows, and horses, three quarters of the year. Its grain stands in the place of European corn, to feed the Negroes, horses, hogs, and sheep, and all other sorts of stock, as poultry for the table; and lastly its stalk, which is a kind of bamboo cane, is fuel to boil off the sugar, &c.

**Q. 36.** Have different European instruments of husbandry from time to time been introduced in the cultivation of plantations in the West Indies; and is it likely that the use of these could be extended, or farther improvements in this respect be applied, to lighten and abridge the labour of the Slaves, in cultivating West India plantations?—**A. 36.** Such different instruments have been introduced, and there can be no doubt that in some situations the proper use of the plough and harrow would lighten and abridge the labour of Slaves very much; but mankind are here, as in most countries, bigoted to their own customs; however, they may be the effect of ignorance: and old customs, like old religions, seldom yield easily to new ones, merely through rational conviction. The change must be effected by insinuation.

The Suffolk and Norfolk ploughs have not been received

ceived in other parts of England, not even in the neighbouring counties, where they would be equally useful! All lands which lie nearly in a horizontal level, not subject to be washed away with our great rains, that are not too deep in wet weather, nor too soon hardened in dry weather, or that are not too rocky, would plough to great advantage. Canes might be planted in trenches by the plough, and thereby save 3*l.* or 3*l.* 10*s.* curr. [43*s.* or 50*s.* sterl.] per acre, for hand-holing. The intervals between these planted trenches could be better weeded by the hoe-plough than by hand-hoes. The dung might then be put out with wheel-barrows; instead of being carried out on the heads of Slaves, the labour which of all others they most abhor; and not without reason, as it generally causes ruptures, from the exertion of running with such a load on their heads.

## SECOND SET OF QUERIES.

Barbadoes contains 106,470 acres, of which about 80,000 productive—Many estates ruined, by Slaves being seized under laws repugnant to English.—Where plough has been tried and abandoned, judgment sometimes wanting.—100 acres yearly of canes require 300 Negroes, old and young, 200 oxen, and 640 acres of land,—neat income about 1950*l.* curr. or 1392*l.* 17*s.* 2*d.* sterl.—100 acres annually of cotton require but one-third of the Slaves, oxen, and land;—hence, since decrease of Slaves and of profits on sugar, &c. many plant cotton, though 100 acres of it clear not above 450*l.* curr. or 321*l.* 8*s.* 7*d.* sterl.—because yielding no offals, such as melasses, &c.—Exertion may increase sugar crop 400 or 500*l.*; but destroys workers to above double that value.—English Farmer hires Labourers as wanted,—gains by work, and loses not by sickness or death.—In W. Indies, labour not to be had, as wanted; so that proprietor must be master

*master of his labourers.*—Slave's death is a loss of 2000 days' labour.—Holing must be continued, where ploughing is impracticable.—Carts bring compost for penus — ut, after holing, dung must be distributed by Slaves.—No diffidence whether Owner lives in England or W. Indies, except from unfaithfulness of Overseers, &c.—which Island Laws encourage, by rejecting the testimony of Negroes,—making them effectually blind, and deaf, and dumb.

**QUERY 1.** What is the whole number of acres in the island of Barbadoes ; and how much of that part which is at present not cultivated, is capable of being brought into cultivation ?—*Answer 1.* The whole island contains 106,470 acres, of which, supposing about 26,470 to be occupied by necessary roads, houses, fortifications, &c, there will remain about 80,000 acres of productive land.

**Q. 2.** How much land is there in Barbadoes which is not private property ?—*A. 2.* The few spots appropriated to the Crown for fortifications, &c. are not worth notice in this large account. All the rest of the land is, some how or other, occupied as private property ; though not all to the best advantage. Many sugar plantations, whose works have been destroyed, and the Negroes and working cattle (properly the *averia canuæ* of this island) carried off by the operation of an impolitic and unjust law, repugnant to the laws of England, lie in a neglected state, not producing a third part of what, in their former condition and circumstances, they were capable of.

We have not the means of saying, with precision, what the quantity of such neglected lands may be ; but we suppose, by an inquiry at the marshal's office,  
the

the broken-up mill plantations within the last ten years would be found to be many thousand acres.

Q. 3. What proportion of the land which is private property, in Barbadoes, is now in cultivation? What proportion of the land now in cultivation in the said island would, from situation or soil, admit of the use of the plough?—A. 3. The first part answered in the preceding answers, A. 1. and A. 2. To answer the second part, would require a special survey of the island, selecting such grounds as should be marked out by a person of complete knowledge and experience of the soil, agreeable to the description of lands fit to be ploughed, as given in A. 36.

Q. 4. In how many plantations in Barbadoes has the plough been known to be introduced, for the purpose of preparing land for cultivation?—A. 4. Cannot say: but we know that in some places where ploughs have been tried, and laid by again, experience, judgment, and practical knowledge, were not always assisting in the operations.

Q. 5. How many Slaves in the whole are employed in the said island, in the cultivation of sugar, cotton, coffee, indigo, &c.? And how many in menial services, in making roads, fishing, or any other employments?—A. 5. Some facts from the treasurer's office, might assist in forming an answer by estimation to this question, by knowing the number of Negroes given in from the inhabitants of the four towns, distinct from the number given in by the planters and inhabitants of the country, and likewise the number given in by those who keep fishing boats, and droghers, [freight-boats] but not having

having this information, the writer of this answer can form no estimate.

Q. 6. What proportion does the number of Slaves bear to the number of acres employed, in each species of cultivation, and what is the average proportion of produce in each species, to the number of acres or of Slaves?—A. 6. To cultivate and manure annually 100 acres of canes, requires the labour of 150 working Negroes at least in the field, besides several others in different offices, as tradesmen, watchmen, cattle-keepers, carters, &c. and an allowance for old and past labour, sick, breeding women, and children, making in the whole 300; and for raising sufficient manure, there should be 200 head of bulls, cows, and oxen; to support all which there should not be less than 640 acres of productive land, in order to allow enough to feed both Negroes and cattle, and to spare about 46 acres, or one-14th of this land, for militia tenements; the average produce of which plantation should (barring accidents of climate, war, and infidelity of servants) be about 162 small hogsheads or tierces of Muscovado sugar, and as much rum as to pay the current plantation expences, and to leave the sugar as a clear income, value in these times about 1,950*l.* [1392*l.* 17*s.* ster*l.*]

For 100 acres of cotton, one third part of the Negroes required for the culture of 100 acres of canes, would be sufficient, one-third of the land, and one-third of the cattle; and hence it has happened, that since the decrease of Negroes, the diminution of the profits by sugar, and the increase in the price of lumber [boards, scantlings, staves, &c.] and other supplies from Ame-  
rica,

rica, that so many planters have taken up the culture of cotton in this island ; though the annual average value of 100 acres of cotton on the sugar plantations in the interior parts of the island, remote from the sea (if it escapes the forementioned precarious accidents) will not be above 450*l.* [32*l.* 18*s.* 7*d.* sterl.] clear, for want of those offals of a sugar estate, ruin, mellasses, and trash, so necessary to the support of the Negroes ; yet as the exertion of labour for cotton is so much less than that required for canes, both prudence and humanity have recommended it to many planters of large estates \*.

Q. 7. Is the corn, grass, or ground provisions raised in Barbadoes, produced from separate farms, or from lands annexed to the plantations respectively, and worked by the Negroes belonging to the said plantation ? What is the kind of manure made use of in the

\* While, by imprudent exertions on sugar plantations, there might have been a visible increase of crop, perhaps to 400 or 500*l.* [cur.] annual value, there was at the same time an annual decrease of working Negroes to more than double that value ; so that when a prudent proprietor looks into his accounts, he finds it his interest to be contented with a smaller annual income for some years to come ; while he is sparing the lives of his Negroes, as well as encouraging their increase, and thereby preventing an annual loss of his stock, more than double the increase of income by the former imprudent exertions. In England, where a farmer is only at the temporary expence of hiring as many labourers, day by day, as his farm requires, all exertions of labour will turn to his profit, and all deaths and sickness of labourers are not his private loss. But in this colony every thing is bounded within narrow limits ; no hired labour is to be had when most wanted ; every proprietor must be master of all his labourers, and the death of a single working Slave is equal to the loss of 2000 days of his labour.

said

said island?—*A. 7.* In Barbadoes there are no separate pasture, or provision grounds: the great population of the island admits of no such distant appendages. All the several useful divisions, appropriations and operations, are performed within the bounds of the same plantation, and by the common plantation Negroes. The manure is described in *A. 27.*

*Q. 8.* If in general the planters were to employ mules and cattle in carrying out the manure, would it not be for the advantage both of the Negroes and the Owners?—*A. 8.* The mode of making cane-holes must necessarily be continued in all situations where the use of a plough is impracticable, or improper. Carts and cattle are employed to bring the compost to make up the pens on the fields; but after they are holed, when the dung is to be distributed to the several holes, it is necessarily to be carried out to all parts of that field by Negroes; as mules or cattle could not make their way over the obliquity of the cane-holes. See *A. 27.* and *A. 36.*

*Q. 9.* Upon a plantation with a given stock of Negroes, and yielding on an average a certain annual quantity of sugar, what may be supposed to be the neat income to the owner, if living on the island, after deducting the charge of maintaining and clothing his Negroes, the wear and tear, and other expences; and what the neat income of the owner living in Great Britain?—*A. 9.* There can be no difference in the neat income from a certain average produce, whether the Owner resides in England or in Barbadoes, except what may arise from the carelessness or the infidelity of his Attornies, Agents, and Overseers.—But the ex-  
amples

amples of such infidelity have been experienced too often, to leave any doubts about the probability of its being felt by many Absentees.

The Laws of this island are of so unaccountable a cast (we mean the local laws) as if they were particularly designed to encourage such infidelity, by disqualifying all Negro evidence against white men. For although 300 Negroes on a plantation being examined, and cross examined, might discover many frauds practised in their full view, and in execution whereof they may have been commanded to assist; yet the happy effect of this law is to render them effectually blind, deaf, and dumb.

### THIRD SET OF QUERIES.

Free Negroes do not beg, and are well clothed and fed—but Barbadoes pestered with ragged White beggars.—Probably the former work not along with Slaves; because exposed to violence of Overseers, &c.—Many are mechanics and, as militia tenants, cultivate their tenements industriously.—Acre of good land in Barbadoes, well cultivated, supports three people—Foot-soldier has 2 acres, horse-man 4—Young free females do needle work, &c.—Elder keep shops, and receive stolen goods,—generally for White hucksters, who know that the crime cannot be proved by Negro evidence;—hence four acts to prevent stealing cotton deficient; and will be so, till evidence of Blacks can convict White receivers.—Respondent has inquired chiefly into cultivation and charges of estates, and moral effects of Slave-laws.—French have American lumber, &c 150 per cent. cheaper than Barbadoes Planters.—In American war, the latter unable to buy new Negroes; but many were smuggled away.—Now that island gives as much for Negroes as others.—Freight of sugar and cotton, much dearer since American war.—W. Indian crops brought home, not by Slave-ships, but by those which carry out stores, &c.

QUERY



**QUERY 1.** What is the disposition of the free Negroes with respect to labour, particularly continual or diurnal labour?—**Answer 1.** It is in general obvious to any person of observation, that free Negroes and Mulattoes must apply themselves to some kind of industry, as they are never seen begging, either males or females; whereas the island in general is pestered with white beggars, of both sexes, and of all ages, covered only with filthy rags; while the free Negroes and Mulattoes are well clothed and appear to be well fed. Probably they do not offer themselves to work for daily wages in the field, mixed with plantation Slaves, because, knowing themselves to be either Negroes or the descendants of Negroes, legally exposed to any violence which an angry overseer or other white servant might commit against them with impunity, they prudently employ themselves in other ways. Many of the men work at the various trades of smiths, carpenters, and masons, and serve as militia-tenants, and cultivate their tenements industriously. Two free black tradesmen, a mason and a carpenter, are militia-tenants on the estate of this respondent, and labour on their tenements with their own hands, living with sobriety and good order. Several others rent small parcels of land in his neighbourhood; and some of them, by their industry, have been able to purchase little freeholds, and build good habitations on them. We think it proper to observe here, that an acre of plantable and productive land, carefully cultivated, is sufficient to supply three persons with food; and that a tenement for a foot soldier must be two acres, and for a horseman four acres.

Among the free females, the younger ones, besides needle work, probably derive some profits by gallantry; the elder, by having saved something on which they trade by huckstering, though industrious, are not the most useful to the community, as their shops are generally receptacles of all sorts of stolen property; but the free Blacks and Mulattoes in this trade are only few, otherwise than as the servants and sub-agents of the white hucksters (some of whom denominate themselves merchants in the capital towns) to collect stolen property for them out of the plantations; knowing, that under the disqualification of Negro evidence, the crime of being *receivers of stolen property*, cannot be proved against them. Four several acts of the colony have been made to prevent the stealing of cotton, and very severe against the receivers, but defects were soon found in them all, upon trial; and such defects will always continue till the information of Negroes can be legally taken against white suborners and receivers.

Q. 2. Are not the French planters able to send their sugar to the European markets at a lower price than the English planters?—Q. 3. Can you say on an average in what proportion cheaper than we do?—Q. 4. Can you assign the causes of their sending it to the European markets cheaper?—Q. 5. Does the English planter cultivate his land at more expence than the French? State the particulars, and the reason why.—

A. A. 2, 3, 4, 5. This respondent, having during eight years of his residence on his estates here, confined his inquiries and observations chiefly to the modes of cultivation, and the incident charges of a plantation, and 2dly, to the moral effects of local laws and customs,

tems, on the manners of the people both Free and Slaves, in this colony, can only set forth two evident advantages of profit in favour of the French planters, which might enable them to sell their produce something cheaper than the English, if the facts supposed in the queries be really true: and those two advantages are, that by their free trade with America, or rather America with them, they have lumber generally about 120 per cent. cheaper than the planters in Barbadoes, and they have also the power of paying for their American importations in rum instead of cash, which is an advantage of about 30 per cent. more; consequently they gain 150 per cent. in their paying for lumber and American necessities; and in that part of their annual expences they will work at a charge of two shillings for what the English planter must pay five; and perhaps the French impost on sugar may not be altogether so high as the English duties. But of this last fact, this respondent is not sufficiently informed.

Q. 6. Do not the French purchase from our traders a great proportion of the Negroes they want; and do they not pay a higher price for them?—A. 6. The hardships this island suffered during the late war, rendered the planters here incapable, in general, of buying any imported Slaves. On the contrary, many were smuggled away and sold from the island; but at present the price given for Slaves in this island, is supposed equal to what is given by any other neighbouring islands. The French probably buy a share of the imported Slaves.

[As the respondent could not answer queries 7 and 9, they are omitted.]

Q. 8. Is

**Q. 8.** Is not the price of freight for a given quantity of sugar from the French islands to Europe, greater than the price of the same quantity from the British islands?—**A. 8.** Not informed: but we know the price of carrying home sugar from this island has been raised since the war above 14 per cent. beyond the old price before the American revolt, and the freight of cotton 25 per cent.

**Q. 10.** Are the ships which bring Negroes to the British islands employed in carrying back the produce of those islands to Europe?—**A. 10.** Probably not, or only in a very small degree; the ships which bring out necessary stores, provisions, and dry goods, for the use of the plantations and inhabitants of Barbadoes, carry back the produce of these plantations, in general.

**Q. 11.** Can you say what proportion these ships may make of the number freighted from the islands?—**A. 11.** This respondent cannot say what proportion they may make of the number freighted from the other islands; but he believes they are seldom or never freighted from Barbadoes, farther than some small adventures, and for their sea-stores.

#### FOURTH SET OF QUERIES.

Negroes, &c. both Free and Slaves in Barbadoes, about 72,500, Whites about 30,000.—Respondent's former Overseers carried off or destroyed his stock-books.—Has now 338 Slaves.—His list reasoned upon.—Funeral procession of 2000 or 3000 Free Negroes, &c. when a Negro happens to be wantonly shot, in or near Bridgetown.—In the country, many wanton murders—scarcely noticed, more than the death of a cow or a horse.—Great error of Absent or careless Proprietors, to let Overseers bring into their plantations Slaves on hire.—Another error is, to

let Overseers buy all males for plantation, while for themselves they buy chiefly females:—placing them in house, and turning employer's domestics into field, where hard labour, *under the Whip*, soon kills them.—Overseer on retiring, carries off children of his women, by plantation-men, leaving employer almost destitute of rising generation.

**QUERY 1.** An account of the number of Negroes annually imported into the island of Barbadoes, as far as any such account can be made up; distinguishing the number imported in each year, the proportion of males and females, adults, and children, and the number and tonnage of the ships in which they have been conveyed?—*A. 1.* Some account of this may be had from the treasurer's books; but whether to the extent desired, this respondent cannot say; nor, as an individual, can he say any thing farther to it.

**Q. 2.** An account of the number of Negro slaves, of free Negroes, indented servants, and of free white inhabitants, which are at present in the island of Barbadoes, with a like account for any former period, as far as the same can be ascertained, distinguishing, with respect to each of the foregoing classes of inhabitants, as far as possible, the number under one year of age, from one to 8, from 8 to 18, from 18 to 30; or forming them into such other classes as it may be more convenient to bring them under; and distinguishing the number of country-born Slaves from those which have been imported, and the number of each of the foregoing classes which are supposed to have been born and to have died annually?—*A. 2.* The number of Negroes in 1787 was near 63,000 (those for 1788 are not made up yet.) It is generally supposed there may

may be about four or five thousand Slaves more in the island (perhaps new-born infants not yet given in to the treasurer, some run-aways, and some old, diseased, or past labour, abandoned by their owners) so that the whole number of Slaves may probably amount to about 67,500; the number of free Negroes and Mulattoes cannot be less than about 5,000; though there is no certain account of them by any legal authority\*. This would bring up the whole number of the Negro race to about 72,500; the number of whites can be very little, if at all, under 30,000; as the militia musters upwards of 3,000, from which duty all

\* It is usual, when a Negro is wantonly shot by some angry white man, in the neighbourhood of Bridge Town, that the free Negroes and Mulattoes make a ceremonious funeral; after which some two or three thousand men and women, in decent mourning, walk in solemn procession, the kindred of the deceased as chief mourners, and after these all that were their friends or acquaintances;

(———“*Tum mœsta phalanx Teucrique sequuntur,  
Postquam omnis longè comitum processerat ordo.*”)

but quite peaceable, silent, and inoffensive; and without any peculiar notice being taken of this procession, or of the occasion of it, by the town's people, but as of an occurrence in the ordinary course of events.—From one of these processions, which this writer saw in Bridge Town soon after his arrival in the island, and which, from the length of time it was passing, must have consisted of about two thousand people, he was enabled to make some estimate of the probable number of free Negroes and Mulattoes in the other towns and parishes of the island.

Another such funeral procession was made a few days ago (May 1788) the number said to be about three thousand people; on the occasion of the Negro woman shot by a [white] man in Bridge Town—Many such wanton murders happen in the country, but, when distant from the towns, are scarcely noticed, any more than the death of a cow or a horse.

chief overseers of plantations, and several other orders of men; are exempted by law; and besides these exemptions, deducting women, children, superannuated, cripples, and sick persons, from the 30,000 Whites, and considering that no country can furnish more than a tenth of its numbers to a militia, we cannot put the whole number at less than one hundred thousand of all sexes, ages, and colours — This respondent can give no account, from his own knowledge, of any indented servants being now in the island; that is, of servants indented in Great Britain or Ireland, and brought hither under such indentures; nor has he any account of what number of such servants were here in any former period, since the short account given by Ligon, (141 years ago) when there were 28 such servants on the plantation which now makes part of the land in possession of this respondent.

He can only distinguish the proportions of his own Slaves in the following classes; for Negroes can seldom give any account of their own ages, and his attornies and former overseers either carried off or destroyed the stock-books of their times. The age of his oldest man, a Mulatto, about ninety-seven years, who was born in the beginning of Colonel Kendal's government: — In the first class, called in the plantation *first gang*, are included head-men, officers, and tradesmen, such as drivers, rangers, carpenters, coopers, smiths, masons, distillers, boilers, clayers, herdsmen, and groom, and some domestic servants. The second class, called in plantations *second gang*. The third class, called in plantations *third gang*. The fourth class, called *playing children*; and fifth class, called *sucking children*.

Anno 1787.		Males.	Fem.	Mal. and Fem.	Total	of both Estates.
First class, including all ages from 20 to 97.	In plantation K. 1st gang	78	80	158		
	In plantation B. 1st do.	36	23	64		222
Second class, ages from 13 to 19.	In do. K. 2d gang	19	15	34		
	In do. B. 2d do. -	8	2	10		44
Third class, ages from 6 to 12.	In do. K. 3d gang	10	16	26		
	In do. B. 3d do. -		5	5		31
Fourth class, ages from 2 to 5.	In do. K. playing children	6	12	18		
	In do. B. do. -	3	5	8		26
Fifth class, ages under 2 years.	In do. K. sucking and weaning children.	4	7	11		
	In do. B. do. -	2	2	4		15
Total		160	172	338		338

There is an increase since the year 1787, but the account is not made up till the delivery of the clothing, which will be in a few days; the stores being arrived, but not landed. In the first plantation, there are only 14 African-born, 9 males and 5 females, all 30 years old and upwards to above 60, except one about 22, bought 2 years ago. And in the second plantation, there are 14 African-born males, all of 20 years and upwards, and no females. The African-born females were the property of the former overseers. The number in the first gangs being 222, and those of all the four junior classes amounting to no more than 116, it is obvious that the disproportion must have been owing to a failure of births, or barrenness for a long interval, till within five or six years past. From 44 to 222 is a glaring disproportion between the first and second classes; for without such a defect in births,



births, and such an increase in deaths, as is stated (in Ans. 17.) of 57 deaths, and only 15 births, in less than four years, the numbers in the 4 interior classes should have exceeded, or at least equalled, those in the first class \*.

Q. 3. An account of the number of Slaves annually exported from the said island in each year, as far as such account can be made up, distinguishing the num-

\* The following observations, drawn from facts which, in the course of above forty years, have happened in the fore-mentioned plantations, will account for a great part of the deficiency in the three middle classes.

Among several erroneous practices and opinions which have been established here, much to the disadvantage of Absent or careless Proprietors, one is, that of admitting Overseers to bring into their plantations gangs of their Negroes upon hire, under the plausible reason of alleviating the labour of the plantation Negroes. Another error is, that many such overseers recommend to their masters, in purchasing supplies of young Africans, to buy all males, as they will be more immediately profitable by their work; whereas females are above three parts of their time taken up in breeding and suckling a tedious and precarious off-spring, from which no profit can be expected for many years to come. But, at the same time, these prudent advisers buy mostly females for themselves, keeping them in the house at the expense of the Absent Masters, and charging them in the books as working in the plantation, while the master's house Negroes are turned into the field, under the specious pretence of increasing the working gangs; where that unaccustomed labour, under the Weight of the Whip, generally puts an end to their troubles, and their lives, in a short space. And in the course of time, when this overseer, for some more alluring interest, retires from this plantation, where the novelty of his purchased females had attracted the desires of the plantation-men, he will of course carry off the off-spring of his female Slaves, leaving the plantation almost destitute of any rising race in the second and third gangs, and in the fourth and fifth classes, which alone could have supported the old stock.

ber exported in each year, and the proportion of males and females, and of adults and children.—A. 3. Perhaps the treasurer may give some account in answer to these queries, this respondent cannot.

## No. XIX.

### A JUDICIAL CHARGE

DELIVERED

BY THE HON. JOSHUA STEELE,

AS CHIEF JUSTICE, &c.

Court House, Barbadoes, in Grand Sessions, Dec. 1790.

Illegal enormities too long neglected.—Caribbee Islands a British Province, by *Charters* 5 Charles I. and 15 Charles II.—with benefit of English Laws, and power to make Laws *not repugnant to the Laws of England*.—Many Barbadoes Laws, made by ignorant, or ill-designing men, so repugnant to Laws of England, as to expose the Province to be deprived of its *Charters*, and left in *Misericordia Regis*.—Grand Jury charged to inquire, whether Barbadoes Statutes No. 28, &c. of Hall's edition, are or are not repugnant to Laws of England?—Whether Instruction 25 Geo. II. to Gov. Grenville, was not a Royal Presentment, against the island laws? Whether those laws are not enforced, notwithstanding?—Whether there was not a Presentment of a Barbadoes G. Jury against Hall's edition of those laws?—Whether the coins circulating in the island have not been notoriously and collusively clipped, &c.—Whether legal fines have been paid, and accounted for?—Gratitude to the King, for defence of Barbadoes, the natural key of W. Indies.—Gov. Parry respected.—If its laws were amended, Barbadoes, without savage importations, would profitably maintain from 40,000 to 50,000 more inhabitants.

Grand Jury thank his Honour, and his predecessor, for opening investigation into the diseased Legislation of the colony;—find that several of its laws are repugnant to Laws of England;—that No. 82 is grievous to the Slave, and disgraceful in itself;—that no public proceedings followed former G. Jury's Presentment  
against

against Hall's edition of Barbadoes laws; that the current coin is atrociously depreciated, &c.

Mr. Foreman, and Gentlemen of the Grand Jury;

His Excellency the Governor having done me the honour of appointing me his *locum tenens* for this Session, it becomes my duty to give you, who are the constitutional censors of this community, such a Charge, as may excite your patriotic attention, in making all the legal inquiries necessary, for exposing to the public eye, and to the knowledge and authority of our local legislative powers, all such illegal enormities, which to our discredit as a commercial people, and to the continued injury of the agricultural interest of the colony, have been, by much too long, neglected.

In order to this, I think it necessary, First, to recall to your minds that we are a British province, or particular district, of an extensive English county, legally formed, or created, of and in the Caribbee islands, in these seas; and we in this island, are a distinct corporate body, so constituted by the supreme authority of these Charters, the fifth of Charles I. and the fifteenth of Charles II.; both which, for this occasion, I have caused to be transcribed and certified from your records. And I am to inform you, that under the authority of these Charters, we are entitled to the benefit of all such laws of England, as were existing unrepealed, in the fifteenth year of his late Majesty King Charles II. and by these Charters we are also intitled to, and invested with, powers of making laws for the good government of the people, *provided such laws be not repugnant to the Laws of England*, I say, that they be *not repugnant, but as near as may be, to the Laws of England.*

But

But I am sorry to observe that many of the local laws of this colony appear to have arisen from the crude conceptions of ignorant, or ill-designing men; for, so flagrantly repugnant some of the local laws, and the practices under them, are, to the Laws of England, that it can be ascribed only to the clemency of the Crown, that the hand of power has not been laid upon us, and that the province has not been deprived of these important Charters, and left in *Misericordia Regis*.

Therefore, Mr. Foreman, and Gentlemen of the Grand Jury, it is my duty to charge you, upon the oath you have taken, FIRST, to inquire, Whether the statute No. 28, in Hall's edition of the laws of Barbadoes, is, or is not, repugnant, and not as near as may be, to the Laws of England?

SECONDLY: Whether clause the 19th in the statute No 82, is, or is not, repugnant to the Laws of England?

THIRDLY: Whether clause the 8th in No. 148, is, or is not, repugnant to the Laws of England?

FOURTHLY: Whether an Instruction given by the Lords Justices at Whitehall, in the 25th year of His late Majesty King George II. to the Hon. Henry Grenville, then Governor of this colony, signifying it to be His Majesty's will and pleasure, that the said Governor, together with the Council and Assembly of His Majesty's said island of Barbadoes, should *revise the laws* of the said island, and *in lieu thereof*, frame a well digested body of *new laws* (as recited in statute 204 of Hall's edition) and say, in your answer, Whether this Instruction from the Crown should, or should not, be

be considered as a monitory *Presentment*, from the Sovereign, against the unconstitutional laws of this island, at that time illegally carried into practice; and whether such unconstitutional laws, and the practices under them, do, or do not, still continue to be enforced in this colony, disregarding the *aforsaid Regal Admonition*?

FIFTHLY: You will also inquire Whether there was, or was not, a *Presentment* of a Grand Inquest of this colony, within three or four years last past, against the illegality and impropriety of Hall's edition of the laws of this colony, for the reasons set forth in the said *Presentment*? And whether any, or what proceedings were had in consequence of such *Presentment*?

SIXTHLY: I do also give you in charge to inquire, Whether the most notorious, scandalous, fraudulent, and felonious practices, of filing, clipping, diminishing, defacing, and otherwise debasing, such coins of gold and silver as have been negligently permitted to pass current in this colony, to the great injury of honest individuals, and of the community at large, have not been, and are not practised, or supposed to be collusively encouraged in circulation, in this colony? And whether such frauds have not been continued in this island, for several years past, without any public or effectual means having been taken by the legislature, to put a stop to such collusive and criminal practices?

SEVENTHLY: And you are also to inquire, Whether any Fines, or amercements have been laid on individuals, or communities, in any of the late Grand Sessions, or in any other of the King's Courts in this colony;

colony ; and whether all or any such fines and amercements have, or have not, been paid or discharged, and to what amount ? And whether they have, or have not, been properly accounted for, by whom, and to whom ?

Other heads and particulars of inquiry, according to the legal and prudent customs of our British ancestors, might be given in charge to you ; but, for the present, these, as the most urgent to be answered, may suffice ; except, that if any enormities should occur to the knowledge of all or any of yourselves, such enormities should be conscientiously presented by you : for, to all these particulars, you are bound to answer to the best of your knowledge, according to your oath.

Such Bills of Indictment as may be delivered to you, by the officers of the Crown, you will return with answers, according to the dictates of your consciences, and according as you may find them supported by the evidence in behalf of the prosecution. But if any doubts or difficulties, in the execution of these your several duties, should occur ; on application to the Court, you shall be advised, or directed, as the case may require.

Thus, having gone through the official part of my duty, I cannot conclude without remarking, that during the novel and doubtful state of public affairs in Europe, we must be gratefully sensible of the paternal care taken by His Majesty, for the permanent defence of this important station, the natural key and barrier to all the British West India property ; and we must also be truly sensible of His Majesty's favour to us, by continuing His Excellency, our present Governor, in this colony ;

colony ; where his equitable conduct, on the seat of justice, his general attention to the concerns of the colony, and his affability in private life, have rendered him in all points respected and esteemed.

And now if, by some happy amendment in our local laws, our legislators could succeed in removing the causes which nourish indolence and false pride in our white and impoverished peasantry ; and if such an amendment could be so ordered, as to contribute at the same time to enlighten and to elevate the minds of our coloured servants and labourers, so as to make them proud of giving proofs of their uniform obedience and fidelity in performing their due labours : such amendments would probably demonstrate, in a short time, that our soil, with due cultivation, and without aid of Savage Importations, is, and would be, capable of maintaining, and profitably maintaining, from forty to fifty thousand inhabitants, of all degrees, more than we have at present ; provided a due proportion of such inhabitants should not be too proud to put their hands to the instruments of husbandry, or to other useful arts.

Court House, Barbadoes, in Grand Sessions,

Dec. 1790.

We, the Grand Inquest for the body of this island, return our sincere thanks for the excellent Charge which was delivered to us by Your Honour, on the opening of this present sessions, and are happy in declaring our sense of the noble spirit which has led Your Honour to open for us that channel of public investigation,

gation, which if properly pursued, must produce the most salutary effects on our diseased system of policy and legislation; and we take the liberty, at this time, to offer our acknowledgements due to the eminent abilities and patriotic spirit of Your Honour's Predecessor in this business, who in the Sessions of June, 1787, made the first efforts to call into action this important part of the power vested in Grand Inquests, under the British constitution\*.

Pursuant to the directions in Your Honour's Charge which call on us, as public censors, we find that under the sanction of those Charters, the copies whereof were put into our hands by Your Honour, all ordinances made and to be observed in this island should be reasonable and not repugnant, but as near as may be, considering the nature and condition of the people and place, agreeable to the Laws or Statutes of England; and so as such ordinances do not extend to the binding, charging, or taking away of the right or interest of any person or persons in their freeholds, goods, or chattels whatsoever.

We find by the statute No. 28 in Hall's laws of Barbadoes, referred to by Your Honour, that a mode of collecting debts by course of law, is established in this island altogether dissimilar, and in many respects contrary, to the Laws of England for the same purpose; and therefore we conceive the same to be repugnant and not as near as may be to the Laws of England.

We find that the 19th clause in statute No. 82 of the said laws, referred to by Your Honour, relates to

\* I have not been able to procure a copy of the Charge here alluded to.—W. D.



transactions between Masters and Slaves ; and, although the conditions of that clause are grievous to the Slave, yet having no standard of English Law, we cannot find any thing in the said clause repugnant to the Laws of England, where those two orders of men are not known ; nevertheless, we consider the said clause as a standing memorial of the barbarous policy of our predecessors in this country, and as a disgrace to our code \*.

\* We find that in the Grand Sessions held in June 1787, a Presentment was made by a Grand Inquest of this island against the illegality and impropriety of Hall's edition of the laws of this colony ; and we find that no measures or proceedings have been taken or had, in consequence of such Presentment ; so as such measures or proceedings should become matter of public information, or of record in this island.

\* This dreadful clause is recited at page 45 above ; and its deplorable consequences are stated at pp. 146, 148, and 179. We shall, however, afterwards see that it was not, as is commonly believed, first enacted in Barbadoes, A. D. 1688, but at Jamaica in 1683 ; and that it was adopted at Bermuda, in the year 1730. It has been lately, as I am informed, expunged from the Barbadoes statute-book ; to which, as the above liberal declaration of the Grand Jury indicates, it has long been considered as " a disgrace," by the *higher and more enlightened class of people*. But we shall hereafter see how greatly it is to be lamented, that the improvement of the Barbadoes code depends not more on *that class*, than on an illiterate white peasantry, poor and proud ; whose ruling principle, so to speak, is a rooted *prejudice* against the whole Negro race. Forming a numerous body of voters, at the annual election of the Assembly, those men have too much influence on that essential branch of the legislature ; and thus the laws by which their own injustice and cruelty ought to be restrained, are in some measure, virtually made by themselves !—W. D.

We.

We find that the current coin of this country is depreciated in the most vile and atrocious manner, by clipping, filing, and other practices deserving exemplary punishment in the authors of them, when discovered; and we observe that these practices are daily increasing, and will probably continue, until those invested with power to remedy the evil, are roused from their present state of inattention, to a business which so seriously concerns them, and which was so particularly recommended to them by our late worthy President. We beg leave to observe to Your Honour, that the practice in this island having rarely called forth the censorial exertions of our Grand Inquests, especially on so large a scale, and the time allowed for this business being insufficient for extensive investigation, we find ourselves under the necessity of referring the remaining articles of Your Honour's Charge to be considered by some future Inquest who, having time to obtain the fullest information, may be enabled to do more ample justice to the points now left undetermined, than was possible on the present occasion.

The usual business of the Sessions we have endeavoured to perform with attention, candour, and dispatch; and we flatter ourselves that it has been fulfilled to the satisfaction of Your Honour, and all others concerned.

We concur with Your Honour in acknowledging the paternal care taken by His Majesty of this important island, in the present critical situation of affairs; and we feel ourselves equally ready to rejoice with you in the return of our present Chief to this Government, and to give our suffrage to the dignity, propriety, and benevolence, which distinguish his administration. Nor  
can

can we do otherwise than most heartily to join Your Honour in the particular wish of reform among our white and coloured inhabitants ; and we should consider ourselves highly favoured in being in the smallest degree the humble instruments, under Your Honour's auspices, of promoting so desireable and laudable a work.

We are, Sir, with all due respect and esteem,  
Your Honour's most obedient humble Servants,

JOHN LYTE BELL, *Foreman,*  
*&c. &c.*

END OF PART FIRST.

# MITIGATION OF SLAVERY,

&c.

## PART SECOND.

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### LETTERS

TO

THOMAS CLARKSON, ESQ. M. A.

FROM WILLIAM DICKSON, LL. D.

Showing that Slaves who keep not up their Numbers by the Births, do not nearly refund their Purchase money; the great Success of the Plough in raising the Sugar-cane, both in the East and the West Indies; and other new and important Articles.

“*Res nolunt malè administrari.*” Sir J. Child on Trade : p. 26.

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### LETTER I.

#### *Introductory Address and Observations.*

Occasion of the following Letters — Design to prove that the buying of Slaves is ruinous.—*Bought* Slaves to be distinguished from *bred*.—Calculations on Slave-labour not blameable; but ill performed.—Thinking men have long known it to be unprofitable.—Many Slaves bought in West Indies, independently of Africa.—Few Slave-buyers know the nature of such bargains —Hence involved in debt, they cannot tell why or how.—Grand proposition to be proved, *That bought Slaves neither do, nor can refund the capital sunk.*

LONDON, March 11, 1813.

(THOMAS CLARKSON, ESQ.)

DEAR SIR,

FOR more than two and twenty years, I have been occasionally mentioning to you and other distinguished abolitionists, the great value of the late Mr. Steele's papers, and lamenting the circumstances which compelled me to conceal them. You will not therefore be surprised to be told now, for the first time, that I have kept that gentleman's letter to me, his anonymous ones, and his Charge to the Grand Jury of Barbadoes, sealed up with my will, to be delivered to you, along with my abolition-books, if you should survive me; and to be bequeathed by you, in like manner, to the most zealous, able, and active abolitionist, within your knowledge. But, as Almighty God was graciously pleased to preserve us both to see (in 1807) *one* formidable impediment to the great object of those writings removed, or at least abated, the next thing to be considered was how they might be brought to answer, most effectually, the end proposed by their venerable and beneficent author. For this purpose, I made certain abortive attempts which it is unnecessary here to describe, before I had recourse to the present mode of publication, which I must gratefully observe, you have used your utmost endeavours to promote. It is therefore, on every account, natural and proper for me to address the following letters to my oldest surviving abolition friend who, with the lamented RAMSAY, bore, to my knowledge, an **ESSENTIAL** share in "*the burden and heat of the day,*" with a degree of industry, perseverance, and fortitude worthy of the noble cause which he so ably and successfully supported.

Yours

You are in the right in believing that I am anxious to do justice to the foregoing valuable papers, as well as to their author, and all the parties concerned. But I cannot hope to please them all; nor shall I attempt it, otherwise than by giving no intentional offence, and by waving any particular consideration of those evils of Slavery which fall not within an œconomical view of the subject. My principal design is to attempt to convince the gentlemen concerned, as I have little doubt of satisfying all other persons acquainted with colonial affairs, that the purchasing of Slaves who keep not up their numbers by the births, is a ruinous practice;—so very ruinous, that unless a great proportion of the Negroes had been reared on properties where their treatment did not prevent their natural increase, the cultivation of the sugar islands, by Slave-labour, must have been abandoned long ago.

As the following is a new view of the subject; I must beg you, or rather my readers through you, before we go farther, to distinguish carefully *bought* or *purchased* Slaves, whether born in Africa or the West Indies, from *bred* or *reared* Slaves, born and brought up on the very plantations which they cultivate.

Some well meaning people, you know, condemn, in the lump, all calculations on the lives of human creatures; and certain calculations which might be mentioned, cannot be too much reprobated. But surely a planter is not more blameable for inquiring whether or not the labour of a Slave is likely to refund the money sunk on him and the property he actuates, or makes productive, than a tradesman is for considering whether or not the labour of an apprentice is likely to pay for his instruction and maintenance. The cases are very similar;

similar; except in the circumstance of *buying* the Slave, which affects not the present argument. In a mere oeconomic view, both the planter and the tradesman ought, in prudence; to estimate before-hand, the probable profit or loss of their respective bargains. It will afterwards appear that the planters are but too sparing of such prudential computations, or at least do not conduct them upon right principles.

You need not be informed, that it has been known for many ~~ages~~, to men of reflection, that the labour of Slaves, whether bought or bred, though apparently cheaper, is really far dearer, in general, than that of freemen. But the arguments which support this conclusion, however just, are too refined for the generality of Slave-owners, who cannot be supposed very deep in philosophical, ~~or~~ even in oeconomic theories.

Yet those arguments, as applicable to modern colonial Slavery, were long ago assented to and exemplified by men intimately acquainted with, and interested in the subject.

About the year 1730, Robertson, in his Tracts† complained of the unprofitableness of African Slaves, in the Sugar Islands. And so well convinced was the Legislature of S. Carolina of the same truth, that in 1739, they laid a prohibitory tax on all Slaves imported for sale. This tax, which remained in force till 1744, was expressly imposed to relieve the planters from the debts they had contracted by purchasing new Negroes; whose labour refunded not the money sunk on them,

\* See in the Appendix, the Note marked page 196.

† Quoted in Mr. Ramsay's *Objections to Abolition, with Answers*, pp. 14, 22, 41.

and the property they actuated \*. So fully did that law answer its end, as to induce the intelligent historian of Jamaica to recommend a similar measure to the legislature of that island. Mr. Long does not appear to have succeeded ; but he scruples not to declare, for the strong reasons which he assigns, that “The purchase of new Negroes is the true source of the distresses under which the owners of sugar estates suffer †.”

It is true, that new Negroes can no longer be legally imported into the islands from Africa ; and it would be foreign to our purpose to take much notice of the attempts but too successfully made to introduce them in defiance of the abolition-laws ‡ ; especially as it may be hoped that the Government will ultimately cause those laws to be respected.—But Slaves can still be purchased, and in fact have all along been procured, in great numbers collectively, from several sources purely West Indian, and altogether unconnected with Africa ; from small settlers, such as those called ten-acre-men in Barbadoes, who often raise more Negroes than they have land to employ ; from persons who may find out that they have too great a crowd of domestics ; from planters who may be parting with their estates, or finally leaving the islands ; from dealers who bring Slaves, on speculation, from the other British colonies ; and above all, from the creditors of ruined planters §.

\* Abridg. Evid. before H. of Commons, No. 4. p. 138.

† Hist. of Jamaica, vol. 1. p. 401, and vol. 2. p. 437 ; see also Beckford's Description of Jamaica, vol. 2. p. 344.

‡ See in the Appendix, the Note marked page 197, *a*.

§ See in the Appendix, the Note marked page 197, *b*.

Thus



Thus planters disposed to buy Slaves may still be pretty copiously supplied, without sending to Africa. But it is impossible to believe that the buyers of Slaves (unless they get the Slaves of ruined planters for less than half the current price) can be aware of the real nature and consequences of such ~~business~~. For this would be to suppose (what cannot be ~~fairly~~ expected) that they have some knowledge of the doctrine of annuities, to which the case belongs; and which would effectually cure their pernicious hankering after the Slave-market. But former planters have profitably bought Slaves; and *therefore*, it is to be feared, that the present planters think it is, some way or other, their interest to buy Slaves. Yet, as we have seen, it is a historical fact that Slaves could not be bought at the *full* value, without ultimate loss, at least since the year 1730;—excepting always, those few cases where the returns of their labour were uncommonly great, or where none of them died in the seasoning, and they afterwards kept up, or increased, their numbers by the births.

Like other men in active employments, and particularly agriculturists, the planters are apt to take things in the gross; and to follow implicitly old practices, right or wrong. Or, as Mr. Long expresses it, they are too apt to be satisfied with “vague and absurd estimates,” and to be governed by “barbarous reveries and antiquated prejudices;” which prevent them from seeing their interests in the right point of view. It is no wonder then, that the habitual purchasers of Slaves, though making perhaps what are *thought* saving crops, get into debt, or are kept in it, in a way which they  
cannot

cannot well explain. But if such of them as can manage decimal fractions, will but patiently accompany us in improving a hint given by Mr. Steele, at page 71 above, they will discover the root of the evil, the grand but hitherto unobserved cause of their difficulties. For we hope to prove by a method established by the mathematicians, and followed by all skilful calculators, in parallel cases,

*That the personal labour of purchased Slaves, in general, African or West Indian, employed on sugar plantations, does not and cannot refund the capital sunk on them, and the property which they actuate, or render productive.*

I say their *personal* labour ; for our argument necessarily abstracts from their posterity ; for a reason which will hereafter appear.

The next letter will be employed in establishing the *Data*, on which the following calculations are founded.

I am, with great respect,

Dear sir, Your faithful fellow-labourer,

TO THOS CLARKSON,  
Esq. M. A. &c. &c.

and sincere friend,  
WILL<sup>M</sup>. DICKSON.

## LETTER II.

### *The Data established, &c.*

West Indian estimates seldom allow for decrease of Slaves.—If not kept up by births, Slaves' earnings are only *Labour-annuities*.—The following calculations founded on indisputable *Data*.—Period of effective hard labour short, both in men and working cattle.—Purchased Slaves may average about *seven years* of effective hard labour.—About two in five of bought Slaves die of the *seasoning*, that is, of *broken hearts*.—Deplorable effects of  
Act

Act 5 Geo. II. c. 7.—Produce of Slave-labour as uncertain as its duration.—The following calculations are at 3 and 4 per cent compound interest.

DEAR SIR,

THE calculations of the returns of West Indian property, though abundantly simple as commonly managed, necessarily include a great variety of charges, and subsidiary computations, embracing a mixed multitude of particulars, continually fluctuating both in quantity and price. But, the most important charge of all, that of the Negroes purchased by many planters to keep up their gangs, is generally omitted, or left to be accounted for, as those planters best can, at the end of the statement! Even the greatest masters of our subject appear to acquiesce in this mode of calculation. Mr. Edwards, in concluding his minutely detailed estimate, tells us that he allows “not a shilling for making good the decrease of the Negroes.” In this he does little more than follow the example of his precursor, Mr. Long, who, however, acknowledges that the supply of that decrease is the most chargeable article attending sugar estates\*. And no wonder; for, in pecuniary value, the Slaves form about one half† of the

\* Edwards, vol. 2. p. 260; Long, vol. 1. p. 463; see also eight particular accounts from p. 22 to 32 of the valuable Report of the Commit. on the Commer. State of the W. I. Colonies, July 1807.

† In 1789, when the Slaves were worth 50*l*. sterling, one with another, they were valued at one-third of the whole property; which indeed had been the common estimate for many years. But now that the Slaves average 80*l*. sterling, they must form eight fifteenths of the whole property; for the rest of the W. Indian property has not increased in value, or at least in no proportion to the Slaves.

whole

whole property ; and in importance they may be called the living principle which actuates an otherwise inert and useless lump of matter. From motion, it is remarkable that savages infer the presence of a soul. Without the Negroes, there would be no motion, *no soul*, in a West Indian plantation.

But so it is, that I know of no writer, French or English, competently acquainted with West Indian accounts, who has properly allowed for the decrease of the Slaves \*. They do not even use the language of men sensible of any danger in the purchase of Slaves ; but talk of it as they would of a speculation in “ calico or tobacco.” In short, they have generally abandoned their readers, or at least have given them no explicit advice, at the only difficult and perilous step of their progress ; as if the customers of the Slave-merchants could be reasonably expected to possess even that very moderate knowledge of the extensive and difficult doctrine of annuities which the case requires. For, what are erroneously called the clear returns of plantations which keep up their gangs by purchase, when closely examined, turn out to be neither more nor less than annuities of uncertain amount, derived from the equally uncertain labouring lives of the Slaves ; during which, however, the *whole capital* vested in such plantations, with at least legal interest, must be cleared, or their proprietors will be losers. Depending on the

\* The only *hint* I ever met with (except Mr. Steele's, p 71 above) of the true method of calculating in this case, is the following very brief one of S. Venant, p. 66. “ *Il coute un capital, &c. The Negro costs the capital sum of 2000 liv. which, in the W. Indies, ought to yield an interest*” [what we call a *Labour-annuity*] “ *of, at least, 15 per cent. ; because it is only for the Negro's life.*”

fluctuating

fluctuating quantity and price of annual produce, the returns of Slave-labour do not, like ordinary annuities, consist of any determinate sums; nor do they extend to the whole lives of the Slaves, but to that part of them only during which they are able to labour efficiently. I would therefore beg leave to call them *Labour-annuities*; a subject which, I believe, has never engaged the attention of mathematicians; nor have any observations been made, to serve as a basis for such calculations. Hence I am encouraged to hope, *that this new attempt may, in consideration of its design, be treated with indulgence by my numerous superiors in calculations of this kind.* If not, I should rejoice if the correction of my mistakes should stir them up to examine this subject, with an attention proportioned to its evident importance to the interest of the Planters, and the happiness of their Slaves.

We shall begin then at the interesting point where our predecessors left off. By taking for our *data*, their *results*, namely, what they call the annual returns of plantations, chiefly as estimated by themselves, at different rates per cent. our conclusions will be quite independent of a long catalogue of fluctuating and contingent particulars, the prices and quantities of which it is easier to controvert than to ascertain. Those conclusions also will apply equally to all periods, islands, and estates, in which any particular return per cent. is stated to have been received. Thus we shall get rid of all local and temporary modifications. In short, we shall keep clear of all questionable elements of calculation, except the period of actual, efficient labour; to which we shall now endeavour to give all the probability

bability which we can derive from evidence and analogy.

The period of *labour*, especially of effective *hard* labour, is in *no* case whatever, nearly so great as the period of *life*; for all men live long before, and many long after, they are fit for hard labour; some are never fit for it, and some survive their ability for labour of any kind. Few or no inquiries appear to have been made on this point; though so evidently interesting to benefit societies. But a learned and observing physician of my acquaintance, who has practised his profession for many years, in this metropolis, is “well persuaded, from his own observation, and that of other gentlemen of the faculty, that, on an average, the more laborious workmen in London, are not capable of earning the highest wages paid to their respective trades, for more than *ten* years.” The average period during which soldiers, in peace and war, exclusive of killed and wounded, are fit for military duty, is also *ten* years\*; and only *seven* years, if they serve in the West Indies, and survive the seasoning†. The coal-heavers in London, are known to be very short lived; but the average period of their labouring lives I never heard stated.—In the great scarcity of similar observations, I may be permitted to add, that the horses which supply the great iron-works at Carron, in Scotland, with coals, hold out one with another, for seven years‡.

\* This was stated by Mr. Windham, or Mr. Whitbread, or both, in one of the Parliamentary debates relative to the army.

† See Col. Chalmers on the war in St Domingo, p. 92.

‡ This is also taken, as the average labouring life of farmers' horses in England, by Francklyn, On the Abolition, &c. p. 19.

They are put to this work at six years of age, and have each a ton of coals to draw, from different distances, through bad bye-roads. Naturalists, I think, reckon the life of the horse about thirty years; so that the lives of those coal-horses are abridged above one-half. But, for obvious reasons, a brute will bear drudgery longer, in proportion, than a man, and far longer than a man can bear drudgery and Slavery united. For these evils, as Mr. Locke observes, though from their often going together, they are apt to be confounded, are really different things; and act differently, the one on the body, and the other both on body and soul. Lastly, I have heard it remarked that many of the failures among inn-keepers, may be traced to their wearing out their horses, before they refund their purchase-money. Yet few inn-keepers have so great a part of their property vested in horses, as the planters have in Slaves, namely about one-half; and their profits, if not on their horses, certainly on the rest of their property, are greatly superior.

But no apology was necessary for introducing these two last instances; for the planters derive labour-annuities also from their cattle which work many of the mills, cart the produce to the shipping-places, &c. and they often suffer heavily from the premature deaths of oxen and mules, owing very much to bad feeding, and exposure to the weather; but to what average extent I never heard stated.

The above analogical facts will give additional probability to our specific evidence \* on this head, which

\* See in the Appendix, the Note marked page 204.

we have brought to bear, as fairly as we could, on the period of labour fulfilled by purchased Slaves. By that evidence, combined with the circumstances stated as peculiar to *bought* Slaves, we may very safely affirm that *The period of efficient, productive hard labour fulfilled by such Slaves, after they are bought, does not exceed, or rather, in strictness, cannot be proved to equal SEVEN YEARS.* I say, *after they are bought*, grown people being generally preferred, with a view to immediate labour. Thus a great part of their labouring lives are exhausted *before* the purchase; and *after* it, the three unproductive years of seasoning, curtail both their labouring, and their natural lives; nor can the survivors be expected to live so long as *bred* Slaves, in otherwise equal circumstances. So that the labours of bought Slaves are abridged, so to speak, throughout and at both ends; by causes which affect not those bred on the plantations which they cultivate. Some of the former, no doubt, may work for their maintenance, or a little more, for more than seven years; but this being of little or no use to their owners, cannot be called efficient, or productive, hard labour.

The evidence we possess respecting the period of actual labour, relates to the whole *mixed* body of Slaves, of whom we know that bought Slaves are only a part; but *what* part, it seems impossible to ascertain exactly \*. Those in question are also *field* Slaves, on

\* On twenty-two plantations in Barbadoes in 1788, there were 3112 Slaves, of whom 429 were Africans. In the same year, only two-ninths of the whole body of Slaves in the W. Indies, were believed to be natives of Africa. But who can tell how many *bought creoles* there might be? See Supp. to P. C. Rep. p. 39; Impolicy of the Slave-trade, 2d edit. p. 130.

whose



whose period of labour the annual proportions of new Negroes formerly imported and retained, can throw no light whatever; those proportions having been computed on the whole *mixed* mass of Slaves old and young, field labourers, mechanics, and above all the incredibly numerous domestics.

We may, however, inquire with more success, *Who* the purchased Slaves are? They are, or till of late were partly imported from Africa, between the ages of 14 and 40 and sometimes 50 \*, (after which last age they are seldom fit for hard labour) and partly procured in the West Indies, chiefly from the creditors of ruined planters, at all ages; but with less than the natural proportion of young people, and weakened beside by the "hard driving" of owners who had been struggling to get out of debt, as well as by confinement in gaol, before they were brought to sale.

Of the Africans, above one-fourth perished on the voyage to the W. Indies †; and  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. more, being nearly the annual mortality of London, died on an average, in the fortnight intervening between the days of entry and sale ‡. To close this awful triumph of the King of terrors, between one-third and one-half, or about *two in five*, of all whom the planters bought, were lost in "the seasoning," within the three first years, and before they could be said to have yielded any productive labour §. Now if seven years be the

\* P. C. Report, p. 22, 36, 40, 42, 372.

† Nearly 26 per cent. See Abst. Evid. before H. of Commons, p. 51, Edin. edit.

‡ See 2d Rep. of Jamaica Assem. in P. C. Rep. p. 270; Notes on Do. p. 38.

§ Long, vol. 1. p. 400, and vol. 2. pp. 434, 435; Address on the proposed Bill, &c. p. 17; Robertson, as quoted in Object. and

average labouring period of bought Slaves, a lot of five should yield (5 times 7 or) 35 years of labour; and two of them having died, each of the other three must yield (one-third of 35 or) nearly 12 years; or, with the three years of seasoning, nearly 15 years. But to look for fifteen years even of blank existence, without labour, from each of the survivors of a *worse* than pestilential mortality, heartless and enfeebled as they must generally be, would be madly romantic.

For by the best accounts we possess, the whole body of the Slaves die off, and are renewed by importation and procreation together, in a period not exceeding 15 years\*; and the same is about the mean continuance of life of annuitants in *this* country, reckoning interest at 3 per cent. †—Such are the direct consequences of taking the average labouring lives of imported Africans so high as seven years; which, we said, they “could not, in strictness, be proved to equal.” In this position we are farther supported by the respectable opinion of that worthy, but unfortunate planter, Mr. William Beckford, who says that “let a purchaser of new Negroes be ever so successful in seasoning them, he does not think that he will be able, with the most unremitting attention, and even with a superfluity of food, to preserve and domesticate, in three years, *one out of*

Ans. p. 21; P. C. Rep. p. 460; D'Auberteuil, tom. 1. p. 54; Steele, p. 161 above.—The *plague* generally carries off *one-third* of the people visited by it: Sanctorius in *Med. Stat. Aphor.* 130, confirmed by Dr. Lister's comment; Brown's *Hist. of Glasgow*, vol. 2. p. 137; article *Arith. Polit.* in *Alman. de Gotha*, 1809.

\* See in the Appendix, the Note marked page 207.

† Lee's *Annuities*, p. 233; Mortimer's *Broker*, p. 189; M'Arthur's *Financial Facts*, p. 109.

*four,*

*four*, who shall turn out a really industrious and efficient Slave\*.” At this rate, to expect each of four Slaves purchased, to average seven years of labour, would be to expect the “industrious and efficient” survivor of the seasoning, to labour for twenty-eight years, or, including that fatal period, for about forty years: *Quod esset absurdum*.

As to the Slaves of ruined planters, we have already seen that about 3000 were yearly brought to sale, on sugar estates, in Jamaica alone †; in times so much better than the present, that perhaps it would not be rash to affirm that the number is now doubled. “It is inconceivable,” says Mr. Long, “what numbers have perished in consequence of the law for the recovery of debts, which permits Slaves to be levied on,” [confined in gaol, often till they contract sickness] “and sold at *vendue*. By this means they are frequently torn from their native spots, and their dearest connections, and transported into a situation” [perhaps in another island] “unadapted to their health, labouring under discontent, which co-operates with change of place and circumstances, to shorten their lives ‡.”

Like the rest of mankind, the Negroes love their native spots, and venerate the dust of their fathers; which they inter either close to their huts, or within them, under their beds. The spirit of the reply made by the Canadian chiefs to the French commissioners who came to demand their territory, also stirs in the bosoms of the Negroes.—“Here we were born, and here are the

\* Be Mford's Descriptive Account of Jamaica, vol. 2. p. 342.

† See in the Appendix, Note marked page 197, *b*.

‡ Long, vol. 2. p. 435. See also Sup. to P. C. Rep. p. 17.

graves of our fathers ! Can we say to their bones, Arise and go with us into a foreign land ?” So powerful indeed, is this local and filial attachment in the Negroes, that it is dangerous to remove their habitations even to a more healthful part of the same estate. From such a removal, one of the most humane and exemplary characters in Barbadoes, lost fifty of his people in one year\*. “Bought Creole Slaves,” says Mr. Collins, “must be seasoned not so much to the climate as to the plantation†;” to its new arrangements, new objects, and the new connections which it presents. What then but a mortality hardly exceeded by that of the newly imported Africans, can be expected from the violent seizure of the Slaves under the present laws of extent ;—their imprisonment (till sold), the sale, at open outcry, and the inhuman separation of beings so affectionately attached to their homes and their kindred ? It is nearly forty years since I first witnessed the sale of a numerous gang of plantation Slaves, in a gaol-yard ; and I now remember it as one of the most affecting scenes I ever beheld‡, even in a land of Slavery ; to say nothing of the indecencies attending it. I can therefore, almost excuse Mr. Edwards, when he *execrates* the present laws “for the more easy recovery of debts” in the West Indies ; even though one of them happens to be an A— of P——§. “The odious

\* See Supp. to P. C. Rep. p. 17, and the Report itself, p. 298 ; also Abridg. Min. Evid. before H. of Commons, No. 4. p. 114.

† Practical Rules, p. 380 ; see also p. 49.

‡ They have a song, the burden of which is “Plantation broke, O ! poor me one Quaco O !” But it is not so affecting, at least to me, as “Grace Jones de Regulà,” one of their most beautiful ditties.

§ See Edwards, vol. 2. p. 149 ; and 5 Geo. II. c. 7.

severity," he adds, "of the Roman Law, which declared sentient beings to be *inter res*, is revived and perpetuated in a country that pretends to Christianity!!" —"I do not believe that any case of force or fraud in Africa, can be productive of greater misery than this!" —The consequence is, that, like the imported natives of that continent, plantation "Negroes thus removed, generally languish and die in a short time." (Commit. of Barbadoes Soc. of Arts, p. 95, above.)

From the two last paragraphs, it is evident that *bought* Slaves, whether African or West Indian, die incomparably faster than *bred* Slaves who have never been dragged from their native plantations; and therefore considerably faster than *mixed* bodies of both, to whom *alone* all the information and evidence we have, are really applicable. But we shall waive our title to make a deduction, on that account, from the *seven* years above mentioned, as the period of actual labour, of *purchased* Slaves. We wish also to bury in oblivion, as deeply as practices still existing will allow, certain causes tending yet farther to reduce that period in the *great gangs* of sugar plantations\*.

Authors are entirely silent both as to the probability and the expectation of *labour*, at least in this peculiar case. Our safest and ~~easiest~~ way, therefore, and perhaps the only practicable way, will be to consider what are called the clear, average annual earnings of the Slaves, generally stated at some given rate per cent. on the planter's capital, as an annuity certain to him

\* See Long, vol. 2. p. 406; Letters on Slavery, p. 12; Abridg. Minutes of Evid. before H. of Commons, No. 4. pp. 52, 116, 118, 120.

for *seven* years, immediately following the purchase. Indeed this appears to be most agreeable, not only to the advice of Mr. Smart, quoted below, but also to the meaning of the witnesses on whose testimony our period of labour rests; though in strictness, the return of labour from purchased Slaves is of the nature of a reversion, to commence after the period of seasoning shall expire.—Even if the expectation of labour could be determined, the expectation of the *produce* of that labour would still be a *desideratum*; the crops being as uncertain both in quantity and price, as the labouring lives of the Slaves who raise them. But, though we thus disclaim all pretensions to an accuracy which our subject will not admit; yet we hope to be accurate enough to demonstrate the extreme hazard of purchasing Slaves, with a view to make a profit of their personal labour.

It must be observed that the period of seven years, is an average, or arithmetical mean, between 0, which expresses the immediate death of purchased Slaves, and 14 years, the utmost extent of their labouring lives; and that, if the period of actual efficient labour be carried much beyond seven years, as for example to ten or twelve years, in all probability, they would be in a condition to keep up, or increase their numbers by the births. But with this last case we have nothing to do; for we suppose that there are no births, or that the number and strength of the gangs are kept up altogether by purchase; a supposition absolutely necessary, in order to show the simple and unmodified effects of purchasing instead of breeding. This supposition is indeed but too near the literal truth; for it

is believed that not one in ten of the purchased Africans left posterity\*, and it would be too much to affirm that one in five of the purchased Creoles do so. The hearts of the latter, one would think, are as liable to be broken by being dragged from their native plantations and islands, as those of the former, by being torn from their native continent ;—especially if it be true, as has been pretended, that the Africans who survive the middle passage, are much happier in the West Indies than they were in Africa

As to the improvement of the money, I shall calculate upon only *three* per cent. compound interest ; that is, I shall suppose the capital vested in Slaves, lands, buildings, &c. on the one hand, and the Slaves' annual earnings, as they arise, clear of all expence, but that of replacing the mortality, on the other, to be respectively improved, or improvable, at the rate of *three* per cent. compound interest. At this low rate, a sum of money does not double itself in less than twenty-three years and a half ; whereas at six per cent. *simple* interest, the legal and the *least* West Indian rate, it doubles itself in sixteen years and two thirds. Having been told, however, by an able judge, that the case will bear a much higher rate, I shall *also* calculate at *four* per cent. compound interest, at which rate money doubles itself in seventeen years and two thirds ; and this I do the more readily, because it is agreeable to the example of Dr. Price.

I am, &c.

\* See the P. C. Report, p. 459 ; Letters on Slavery, p. 159 ; and above all, p. 31, of Mr Stephen's excellent pamphlet, intitled " New Reasons for Abolishing the Slave-trade."

## LETTER III.

*Calculations, &c. relative to bought Slaves.*

Reader, who likes not our *data*, enabled to use *data* of his own.

—The annexed *Table*, if circulated among intelligent planters, would long ago have abolished Slave-trade.—*Labour-annuities* extremely uncertain, because crops, prices and expences are so, as well as the labouring lives of Slaves.—The able *Mr. Smart's* advice respecting *Life-annuities*, applied to *Labour-annuities*.—Our calculations suppose planter deliberating about buying Slaves.—*Labour-annuities* calculated without interest.—Slave-buyers not more imprudent than Mississippi, and other deluded adventurers.—Eight calculations proving the purchase of Slaves to be ruinous, on all admissible suppositions.

DEAR SIR,

IT is to be feared that our epistles will be rather unentertaining, if not otherwise unacceptable, to persons who are not, like you, accustomed to patient investigation. We have done, and will do every thing in our power to render the statements plain, without prolixity. But if, after all, some little obscurity should remain, surely West Indian proprietors have suffered enough to stimulate men of ordinary prudence, to scrutinize to the bottom a system confessedly not over agreeable to what are called the laws of nature, either mental or corporeal; and which, for that very reason, may be strongly suspected to harbour some lurking cause of self-destruction.

If, notwithstanding the obvious moderation of the *data* which I endeavoured to establish in the last letter, any *attentive* reader should not be pleased with them, he has only to substitute *data* of his own. I am so far  
from



*from objecting to this, provided he adheres to evidence* as far as it goes, and to close analogy and fair argument, when evidence fails, that I have been at great pains to enable every man who understands decimals, to proceed on any data, or conditions, he may think proper.

I am quite satisfied, however, that no admissible data, or method of calculation, will ever extract a profit from the personal labour of purchased Slaves.

To ascertain, as nearly as possible, the probable loss or gain, one principal question is : For how many years must a Slave's labour clear annually any given sum, in order to refund the money sunk on him and the property he actuates, at any moderate, or low rate of compound interest ? I searched many books for a table directly answering this question ; but to no purpose. In most books, the table of the present value of an annuity for years to come, is supposed to answer the end. But as this did not appear so natural and direct as a table calculated on purpose, I set about constructing one, by the proper theorem, in Simpson's Algebra ; and had calculated and proved about 130 of its particulars, when, on turning over Mr. Smart's excellent tables, I found that which I had been seeking, and which had escaped me from its being ill described in the contents of the volume. The other necessary tables are inserted in every practical book of compound interest and annuities ; but the one in question being to be found, I believe, in Mr. Smart's valuable work alone, it shall be annexed to this letter.

I have taken no other liberty with it, than to accommodate

commodate its title and those of its columns, to the subject in hand. So very important, plain, and convincing are the inferences from this table, that had it been circulated, *mutatis mutandis*, among the more intelligent West Indians, there can be no doubt that it would have put an end to the Slave-trade long ago. For it would have satisfied them that Slaves purchased, even on apparently favourable terms, in order barely to refund, without any profit but a small rate of compound interest, the capital sunk on them and the dead stock, to which they *alone* give life and action, must have *laboured efficiently* for a longer period than people in their condition, can be reasonably expected to *live!!*

The crops, as before observed, from which the returns of Slave-labour, or what we call labour-annuities, are to come, are very uncertain both in price and quantity. The same thing is true both of the regular and contingent expences, the recurrence of hurricanes, &c. Every one of these is as uncertain to the full, as the labouring lives of the Slaves; the supply of whom, if they do not keep up their numbers and strength by the births, must only add "confusion worse confounded" to a labyrinth of co-operating contingencies, which baffles all calculation. To the purchase of Slaves, for the sake of their *labour-annuities*, we may most appositely apply the words of Mr. Smart \* when speaking of *life-annuities*, at a time when the necessary

\* Tables of Annuities, &c. p. 113, first edit. 1726, I believe that valuable work has gone through several editions; the last, improved by Mr. Brand, in 1780. For its high character, see Martin's Decimal Arithmetic, p. 221.

observations were not so numerous as at present ; but yet far more numerous and exact, than any that have hitherto been made on the labouring lives of Slaves. I have inserted or altered the parenthetical words, in order to adapt the passage to annuities derived from Slave-labour. “ At present,” says Mr. Smart, “ I shall take the liberty to state, that the valuation of annuities (depending on the labouring lives of Slaves) is no other than guess-work \*. And therefore the best method I can propose to my reader for their valuation, is to consider with himself what number of years certain he supposes to be equal to the (labouring) life or lives in question ; having a due regard to the age and state of (mind and) health of the (Slave or Slaves.) When any number of years certain is agreed upon, the present value of those years (of labour) at any given rate, is readily found, by (Mr. Smart’s) fourth table of compound interest, and will be the probable value of the (labouring) life or lives required.”—Such, *mutatis mutandis*, is Mr. Smart’s sense of this matter ; and I am glad to find so distinguished a computist on my side ; not only to confirm my statements, but to abate their singularity and apparent boldness.

I believe that henceforth very few Slaves will be purchased by planters who seriously consider this ad-

\* The same opinion is as strongly expressed in the article Annuities, in the Encyclopædia Britannica. The tables of Dr. Halley, Mr. T. Simpson and M. De Moivre are there commended ; but the conclusions from them, in particular cases, are “ considered as a sort of lottery or chance-work.” See also Martin’s Mathem. Instit. vol. 1. p. 235. Of course it is the planter’s wisdom to keep clear of this lottery, by raising his own Slaves, on his own estate.

vice of Mr. Smart's and his table which we shall sub-join;—unless they resolve to treat them in such a manner as to insure their natural increase—or to ruin themselves! The following questions suppose the planter to be engaged in this salutary deliberation, preparatory to cheapening a lot of Negroes; and if their answers are duly weighed, he will give up all thoughts of such a bargain, and flee from the Slave-market, as from a place infected with all the ills of desperate speculation, and blasted credit.

To begin with the simplest case, I shall first consider the habitual purchasers of Slaves as deriving *no interest* from the labour-annuities, as they arise. This is no extravagant supposition, but often a literal fact. For such men generally become so much straitened, that their crops are either anticipated, or swallowed up, as fast as they are reaped, by interest-money, fees to lawyers, and bribes to marshals, household and plantation expences, and above all, by the Slave-market, the chief, though generally unsuspected destroyer of their credit. This case is so plain as to require no theorems or tables, or even to be branched out into separate questions;

For if 100*l.* be sunk on a Slave and the property he actuates, and he labour efficiently only for seven years, and die without issue; then, *the purchaser having no means of recovering his money but a bare labour-annuity for that period (without interest)* it is evident that,

To get back his 100l. in 7 years, with	no profit	the labour-annuity ought to be one-seventh of the amount, viz. of	100, or 14l. 5s. 8d.	at the respective rates of profit, the Slave ought to labour efficiently for	
6 per cent.			142, or 20 5 8		$\frac{1}{8}$ of 142, or 23 $\frac{1}{2}$ years
8 per cent.			156, or 22 5 8		$\frac{1}{8}$ of 156, or 19 $\frac{1}{2}$ years
10 per cent.			170, or 24 5 8		$\frac{1}{8}$ of 170, or 17 years
12 per cent.			184, or 26 5 8		$\frac{1}{8}$ of 184, or 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ years

So then, *barely* to refund the 100l. sunk, the labour-annuity *ought* to be 14l. 5s. 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. for 7 years. To refund it with 6 per cent. profit, the labour-annuity *ought* to be 20l. 5s. 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. for 7 years, or 6l. for 23 years 2-thirds; and so forth.

But the whole British capital vested in sugar plantations did not, for forty years ending in 1807, yield an average return, or rather labour-annuity, of quite four and three-eighths per cent.\* We shall call it, however, 5 per cent., clear of all charges, except making good the mortality of the Negroes. And we have before proved that the average period of the labour-annuity falls within 7 years;

Therefore the whole return falls within (7 times 5) 35l.; which wants 65l. of the *bare* 100l. sunk, and 107l. of 142l., its amount with a profit of 6 per cent.; and so in other cases.

It is true, that the 5l. and 7 years being averages, some planters get not so much as 35l., and others get a great deal more, even as far as 10l. a year for 14 years, which, however, would not refund the principal, with 6 per cent. profit.

Here some readers will be apt to stop short, and to

\* See in the Appendix the Note marked p. 218.

ask, How bearded men can be so absurd as to risk their money in such speculations? But they may as well ask, How and why other bearded men every day risk their money in gaming, in lotteries, in pedestrian, equestrian, pugilistic, and drunken wagers, and other hap-hazard adventures? Why may not a whole gang of Negroes from the Slave-yard, clear, one with another, 10*l.* a year for 14 or 15 years, which some individuals do, as well as a lottery-ticket come up a capital prize; or a whole fleet, sent out with ridiculous cargoes to Brazil or Buenos Ayres, come home laden with dollars? Are all Frenchmen (to say nothing of *other* nations) to be called fools, because many of their nobility and gentry and even their Government itself with the wise Duke of Orleans at its head, as Regent, suffered Law of Lauriston to bubble them with his famous Mississippi scheme? In short, lottery, mercantile and paper gamblers should look at home, before they venture to deride planters for speculating in the labour of broken-hearted bought Slaves, whom they can hardly keep alive without labour! But *they* are not the only persons who suffer by dealing in annuities; which can never be done with safety, or utility, except on a great scale, and under very skilful management. Mr. Hardy shows that a society whom he calls the Aldgate annuitants, paid for twice as many years as they had any probability of living to enjoy their allowances! One of Dr. Price's motives for publishing his valuable work, was to prevent the distress likely to arise from ill-digested schemes of annuities, and he applauds a book, by Mr. Dale, which exposes "the  
insufficiency

insufficiency and iniquity of the schemes of the societies for the benefit of old age\*.”

It appears then, that the buying of Slaves with a view to obtain a profit from annuities depending on their efficient labour, reflects no peculiar or exclusive discredit on the *understandings* of the purchasers.

We now proceed to consider the labour-annuities as bearing interest, as they arise.

*Question 1.* Let the average annual returns of sugar plantations be, as stated above, 5*l.* per cent. clear of all expences, but keeping up the Slaves. If these were kept up entirely by the births, then the 5*l.* on every 100*l.* invested would be the *real*, clear, annual return ; and no farther calculation would be necessary. But if entirely by purchase, then the 5*l.* would be only what we have begged leave to call a labour-annuity, for so many years as the Slaves might be able, one with another, to clear it by their personal labour. What then would be the consequences to a planter receiving (at the first) this gross annual return, if he attempted to keep up his gang wholly by purchase ; the 100*l.* sunk, on the one hand, and the 5*l.* labour-annuity on the other, as it annually should arise, being allowed to be improved, or improveable, at the rates of interest mentioned below ?

\* See Hardy's *Annuities*, p. 133 ; Price, p. 136, and Pref. p. 6. vol. 1. edit. 4.

At *three* per cent. compound interest.

From the present value of the capital sunk	-	-	£100·00
Take the present value of 5 <i>l.</i> labour-annuity, for 7 years to come, which, as we have before seen, is the average period for which purchased Slaves may be expected to labour efficiently, viz. by Mr. Smart's fourth table, the present value of 1 <i>l.</i> annuity, for that time, is 6·23 <i>l.</i> * which multiplied by 5, gives	-		31·15
Remains a <i>present loss</i> , on every 100 <i>l.</i> invested, of (68 <i>l.</i> 17 <i>s.</i> )	-	-	£68·85

At the end of 7 years, the account will stand thus :

From the amount of 100 <i>l.</i> in seven years past, by Mr. Smart's first table,	-	-	£123·00
Take the amount of 5 <i>l.</i> labour-annuity, for same time, by his third table,	-	-	38·31
Remains at the end of 7 years, a <i>loss</i> of (84 <i>l.</i> 13 <i>s.</i> 9 <i>d.</i> )	-	-	£84·69

But this is not yet the whole loss. We see that there is a loss of above 84*l.* if the Slaves labour only for seven years. They *ought* therefore to labour for a much longer period. To determine this period, divide 100 by 5, and the quotient 20 indicates the years' purchase of the property. Look for this last number in the first column of the following table, and on the same horizontal line, in the column marked 3 per cent. stand *thirty-one* years of labour ; and so long *ought* the Slaves to labour efficiently, if they are to refund the 100*l.* sunk on them and the property they actuate ; and this without any profit, beyond a poor 3 per cent. compound interest. To prove this,

The present value of the capital sunk is	-	-	£100
And, by Mr. Smart's 4th table, the present value of 1 <i>l.</i> a year, for 31 years, is 20, which multiplied by 5 is also	-	-	£100

\* Two of Mr. Smart's eight decimal places will be sufficient.

In



In other words, the 100*l.* sunk, is the present value, at 3 per cent. of an annuity of 5*l.* for 31 years; and if, on an average, the Slaves could be reasonably expected to labour efficiently to the end of that period, without any fresh purchases, then, and not sooner, would the purchase-money be refunded, together with 3 per cent. compound interest. If this, I say, could possibly happen, the transaction would be closed, without any other loss than 36*l.* the difference between 286*l.* (the amount of 100*l.* in 31 years, at 6 per cent. simple interest, the lowest West Indian rate) and 250*l.* which, by Mr. Smart's first table, is the amount of 100*l.* for the same time, at 3 per cent. compound interest. But it has been proved, in the last letter, that broken-hearted *purchased* Slaves, cannot be expected to labour efficiently, one with another, for more than 7 years; therefore,

Amount of 100 <i>l.</i> in 31 years past, by Mr. Smart's first table	-	-	-	-	-	£ 250·00
Amount of 5 <i>l.</i> a year, for 7 years past, by his third table	-	-	-	-	-	£ 38·31
Int. thereon, for 24 years, the remainder of the 31, by his first table	-	-	-	-	-	£ 39·56

77·87

So that, at the end of the 31 years, the *loss* is—  
(172*l.* 2*s.* 7*d.*) - - - - - £ 172·13

And this last sum is equal to the amount, at the end of 31 years, of 68*l.* 17*s.* the present loss at the beginning of that period, as it should be. In this manner, we have pursued and verified our other calculations; but brevity will confine us, in what follows, chiefly to the *present loss*, and the period of labour which the Slaves *ought* to fulfil; these points being of primary importance. It is true, that the amount would exhibit a still  
more

more *striking* loss than the present value. But we prefer the latter ; because it implies that the planter is in the act of deliberating about a purchase of Slaves. We wish to give him all the help we can, in his *previous* computations ; to point out their real nature ; and to prevent him, if possible, from making a blind leap into that “ slough of despond ” the Slave-market.

We shall now more briefly state the same calculation, at *four* per cent. compound interest.

From the present value (now) sunk, one hundred pounds,	£ 100
Take the present value of 5 <i>l.</i> labour-annuity for 7 years to come, the average period of the actual labour of <i>pur-</i>	
<i>chased</i> Slaves, by Mr. Smart’s fourth table.	- 30
Remains a <i>present loss</i> , on every 100 <i>l.</i> invested, of	- £ 70

Look as before for 20 years’ purchase, in the first column of the following table, and over against it, you will find in the 4 per cent. column, *forty-one* years, 13 days, of labour ; during which, were it possible, as it manifestly is not, the Slaves *ought* to remain efficient, in order to refund the purchase-money (100*l.*) with its increase at 4 per cent. compound interest. To prove this,

The present money sunk is, as before, one hundred pounds	- - - - -	£ 100 00
And the present value of 1 <i>l.</i> a year, for 41 years, to come, by Mr. Smart’s fourth table, is 19 99 <i>l.</i> which		
multiplied by 5, gives - (99 <i>l.</i> 19 <i>s.</i> )	- - -	£ 99 95

being near enough to the present money sunk (100*l.*) to show that the period of *necessary* labour has been stated with sufficient practical accuracy, at 41 years. Were it worth while to take in the odd 13 days, and to proceed by the proper theorem, the last sum would be

be still more nearly equal to the first ; for the tables are calculated only to half-years.

The deplorable effects of purchasing Slaves instead of rearing them, are already very apparent; though the annual return, or rather labour-annuity, was taken considerably above the general average of  $4\frac{3}{8}$  per cent. It would therefore be a waste of time to calculate on returns below that general average ; some of which would require a period of labour which no human beings, on this side of Noah's flood, could possibly fulfil. We shall add, however, a few questions, in which the annual returns exceed that general average.

*Question 2.* Is it possible for a planter to obtain from his property the legal rate of West Indian interest, 6 per cent. over and above keeping up the strength and number of his Slaves wholly by purchase; the 100*l.* sunk, on the one hand, and the 6*l.* labour-annuity on the other, as it arises, being both considered as improveable first at 3, and secondly at 4 per cent. compound interest ?

First, at *three* per cent. compound interest.

Present capital sunk, one hundred pounds,	-	£100 00
Present value of 6 <i>l.</i> labour-annuity, for 7 years to come,		
by Mr. Smart's fourth table,	- - -	37 38
<i>Present loss</i> on every 100 <i>l.</i> sunk	- (62 <i>l.</i> 12 <i>s.</i> 5 <i>d.</i> )	<u>£62 62</u>

Dividing 100*l.* by 6, the quotient is 16 and 2-thirds, which is not found in the following table. The nearest less number, in its first column, is  $16\frac{1}{2}$  years' purchase, against which in the 3 per cent. column, stand 23 years and 41 days of labour. I enter Mr.

Smart's

Smart's fourth table with 23 years, and find against it, in the 3 per cent. column, 16·44, which multiplied by 6 gives but 98·64, instead of 100. The time of labour is therefore more than 23 years. I try  $23\frac{1}{2}$  years, against which I find in the 3 per cent. column, 16·69, and this multiplied by 6 gives 100·14 or a little more than 100. I conclude then that the true period, for which the Slaves *ought* to labour, is *twenty-three years and a half*, as nearly as the same can be derived from the tables.

*Secondly*, at *four*\* per cent. compound interest.

Present money sunk, one hundred pounds,	-	-	£ 100
Present value of 6 <i>l.</i> a year, for seven years to come, by			
Mr. Smart's fourth table, is	-	-	36
Present loss, on every 100 <i>l.</i> invested,	-	-	<u>£ 64</u>

Look, as before, for  $16\frac{1}{2}$  years' purchase in the first column of the following table, and over against it, in the 4 per cent. column, you will find 27 years 185 days of labour, being a little more than  $27\frac{1}{2}$  years. Against this last number of years, in Mr. Smart's fourth table, 4 per cent. column, stands 16·5. This multiplied by 6 gives but 99. But against 28 years in the same table and column you will find 16·66. Multiply this by 6, and you have 99·96, or nearly 100. *Twenty-eight years*, therefore, is nearly the period during which the Slaves *ought* to labour efficiently, in this case, in order to return their owner the money sunk on them and the property which they actuate, together with 4 per cent. compound interest.

If then, the 100*l.* sunk on the one hand, and the 6*l.* labour annuity on the other, are improved at 3 per cent. comp. int. the period of necessary, or indemnifying labour

labour must be  $23\frac{1}{2}$  years; and if at 4 per cent. that period must be 28 years.\* But the former period is more than thrice as long as purchased Slaves, one with another, are found to labour efficiently, and the latter period is four times as long. The answer, therefore, to the present momentous question evidently is, that *Six per cent. simple interest on the capital invested in Slaves, lands, buildings, and stock, cannot possibly be obtained from any plantation, where the gang is (attempted to be) kept up by purchase alone.*

Question 3. Mr. Edwards, vol. 2. p. 260, states that Mr. Beckford of Jamaica has 2533 Slaves\* operating on a capital of no less than 380,000*l.* sterling. "He doubts, however, as Mr. B. does not reside in the island, and is subject, in *Jamaica*, to an annual tax of 6 per cent. on the gross value of his sugar and rum, for legal commission to his agent†—if he has

\* This is probably the greatest number of Slaves belonging to any one man in the British West Indies. Sir Francis Ford of Barbadoes, had, at one time, 1100. Yet he was an Abolitionist.

† The wide dispersion of the estates in Jamaica, renders a compensation necessary, to the Agents, or "Attornies," of Absentees; whom it was thought this heavy tax would induce to reside. But its effects have been unintentionally oppressive; for it interests the Attornies in increasing the crops, which can only be done by pushing the Slaves. Hence Absentees are apt to be injured or ruined by large crops! See Long, vol. 2. p. 406; Steele, p. 171 above, The Absentee tax recommended for Barbadoes at p. 22, above, would not have the pernicious effect just alluded to, as in that and the other windward islands, it is not common to pay the Attornies. One neighbour generally performs that office for another;—thereby increasing, however, his patronage, among managers, and tradesmen, and consequently his influence at elections, &c. &c.

received

received, on an average of ten years together, any thing near  $6\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. on his capital." But let us allow this to be his *constant* income by a labour-annuity, clear of all deduction but that of buying Slaves: the question is, What would be the consequence, if he should sell his plantations to a person who, misled by the vulgar error "that it is cheaper to buy Slaves than to breed them," should aim at keeping up the gangs wholly by purchase?

*First*, at *three* per cent. compound interest.

Present money sunk,	-	-	-	-	£ 100.00
Present value of 6 5 <i>l.</i> labour-annuity, for seven years to come, by Mr. Smart's fourth table,	-	-	-	-	40.49
Present loss, on every 100 <i>l.</i> invested, (59 <i>l.</i> 10 <i>s.</i> 2 <i>d.</i> )	-	-	-	-	59.51

Dividing 100*l.* by  $6\frac{1}{2}$ , the quotient, 15 $\frac{1}{2}$  years' purchase, is not to be found in the following table. The next greater is 15  $\frac{1}{2}$ , answering, in the 3 per cent. column, to 21 years and 59 days of labour; which is greater than the truth, because 15  $\frac{1}{2}$  years' purchase is so. But the real period during which the Slaves *ought* to labour is little short of *twenty-one years*. To prove this:

The present value of the capital is	-	-	-	-	£ 100.00
And the present value of 6 5 <i>l.</i> yearly, for 21 years to come, by Mr. Smart's fourth table, is but little more than 100 <i>l.</i> namely	-	-	-	(100 <i>l.</i> 3 <i>s.</i> 7 <i>d.</i> )	100.18

*Secondly*, at *four* per cent. compound interest.

Present money laid out,	-	-	-	-	100
Present value, by Mr. Smart's fourth table, of an annuity of 6. 5 <i>l.</i> for 7 years to come,	-	-	-	-	39
Present loss on every 100 <i>l.</i> invested,	-	-	-	-	61

Against 15  $\frac{1}{2}$ , the next greatest to the real years' purchase, as above, I find, in the 4 per cent. column of the following table, 24 years and 245 days, which is evident-

ly too much, for the reason above given. But the indemnifying period, for which the Slaves *ought* to labour efficiently, cannot be much less than *twenty-four years and a half*;

The present money sunk, being - - - - - £100·00

And the present value of 6·5*l.* annuity for 24½ years, by

Mr. Smart's fourth table, being not much more than

100*l.* viz. - - - - - (100*l.* 5*s.* 9*d.*) £100·29

Now, as no Slaves can fulfil, on an average, ~~either~~ 21 or 24½ years of effective labour, the plain answer to this question is, that the new purchaser would be ruined, before the termination of either of these periods.

*Question 4.* Mr. Long and Mr. Steele consider 8*l.* for every 100*l.* as a saving annual return on Sugar plantations, in Jamaica and Barbadoes respectively; and M. D'Auberteuil states that the same return is averaged by two-thirds of the Plain of the Cape in St. Domingo\*. Now can this labour-annuity be derived from any estate whose Slaves are procured and supplied altogether by purchase?

*First, Compound interest at three per cent.*

Capital invested is - - - - - £100·00

Present value of 8*l.* annuity, for seven years to come, by

Mr. Smart's fourth table, - - - - - 49·84

Present loss on every 100*l.* sunk, - (50*l.* 3*s.* 2*d.*) £50·16

Here we have exactly 12½ years' purchase, corresponding with 15 years 329 days of labour, in the proper column of the following table. The nearest greater is *sixteen years*, being a trifle more than the true period of labour. To prove this:

\* Long, vol. 1. p. 491; Steele, p. 114 above; D'Auberteuil, tom. 1. p. 179.

The capital invested, is - - - - £ 100·00  
 And the present value of 8*l.* annually for 16 years to  
 come, is by Mr. Smart's fourth table, a little above  
 100*l.* viz. - - - (100*l.* 9*s.* 7*d.*) £100·48

*Secondly*, Compound interest at four per cent.

The capital sunk is - - - - £100  
 Present value of 8*l.* a year, for seven years to come, by  
 Mr. Smart's fourth table, is - - - 48  
 And the present loss on every 100*l.* invested, - - - £ 52

Against 12½ years' purchase stand, in the 4 per cent.  
 column of the following table, 17 years, 246 days. I  
 try the next less, viz. *seventeen years and half*, which  
 I find to be as near the true indemnifying period of  
 labour as the tables will give it; for

The capital sunk is - - - - £ 100·00  
 But the present value of 8*l.* a year, for 17½ years to  
 come, by Mr. Smart's fourth table, is somewhat short  
 of that sum, viz. only - - - (99*l.* 7*s.* 2*d.*) £99·36

The answer to this question still indicates a great  
 loss. For short-lived bought Slaves can by no means  
 be expected to perform efficient *labour* either for 16,  
 or 17½ years; the least of these happening to exceed  
 the average period in which, according to the evidence  
 quoted in the note on page 204, the Slaves of *all* de-  
 scriptions, bought and bred, field, mechanic, and do-  
 mestic (or at least a number equal to their whole aggre-  
 gate) die off, and are renewed.

*Question 5.* The Committee of the House of Com-  
 mons, p. 4, of their valuable Report, of July 1807, on  
 the commercial state of the West Indies, observe, that  
 the profit from Sugar estates, subject as they are to  
 peculiar risks and vicissitudes, should not be less than 10  
 per cent.; adding that, in the prosperous period pre-  
 ceding



ceeding the year 1800, the profits, in general, did not exceed that sum. This appears also to have been about the return which Mynheer Boode of Demerary, derived from estates worked by nearly 2000 Slaves \*. Let us now see Whether or not a labour-annuity of ten per cent. on the capital, can be obtained from Slaves whose mortality is supplied altogether from the Slave-yard, or the gangs of ruined planters?

*First, at three per cent. compound interest.*

Present money invested, or sunk,	-	-	-	£ 100·00
Present value of 10 <i>l.</i> labour-annuity for 7 years to come,				
appears, by Mr. Smart's fourth table, to be	-	-	-	62·3
Present loss on every 100 <i>l.</i> invested	-	(37 <i>l.</i> 14 <i>s.</i> )	-	£ 37·7

Against the years' purchase, 10, we find, in the 3 per cent. column of the following table, 12 years 24 days of efficient, indemnifying labour, which therefore somewhat exceeds *twelve years*; for

The present value of the capital sunk, is	-	-	-	£ 100·00
And the present value of 10 <i>l.</i> a year for 12 years to come, by Mr. Smart's fourth table, falls a little short of 100 <i>l.</i> being only,	-	-	(99 <i>l.</i> 10 <i>s.</i> 9 <i>d.</i> )	£ 99·54

*Secondly, at four per cent. compound interest.*

Present money invested, or sunk, is	-	-	-	£ 100
Present value of 10 <i>l.</i> annuity, for 7 years to come, appears, by Mr. Smart's fourth table, to be	-	-	-	60
Present loss, on every 100 <i>l.</i> invested,	-	-	-	£ 40

Against 10 years' purchase, we have, in the 4 per cent. column of the following table, 13 years 9 days; so that the period of efficient labour which the Slaves ought to fulfil, in order to indemnify their owner, in this case, a little exceeds *thirteen years*; for

\* See Dr Finckland's interesting Notes on the W<sup>est</sup> Indies, vol. 3. p. 409, combined with vol. 2 p. 328, vol. 3. p. 353, and P. C. Rep. p. 770. Guilder 22*d.* sterl.

The present money sunk is - - - - £100·00  
 And the present value of 10*l.* a year,\* for 13 years to  
 come, is, by Mr. Smart's fourth table, not quite  
 100*l.*; but only - - - (99*l.* 17*s.* 2*d.*) £99·86

Now it would be in vain to look for an average of either 12 or 13 years of efficient labour from purchased Slaves. For, as we have already seen, the survivors of the seasoning (to the island if imported, or to the estate, if bought from the creditors of ruined planters, in the same island) have to make up not only their own period of labour, but that of their dead companions. So that, if *one only* (instead of the average, *two*) out of five purchased, has died, then, the whole number of years being\* (5 times 12 or 13) from 60 to 65, each of the four survivors must labour about *sixteen years*, which, as before observed, exceeds the average period in which the whole of the Slaves die off and are renewed. If *two* die, the survivors must each of them labour above 20 years, &c. Hence the answer to this question also, must be that 10 per cent. on the capital invested, cannot be obtained from the labour of Slaves whose mortality is supplied altogether by purchase; and that their purchaser will be ruined, more slowly indeed, but not less surely, than in the foregoing cases.

*Question 6.* The respectable French writer quoted in the last question but one, tells us that the remaining third part of the famous sugar district there mentioned, averages 12*l.* for every 100*l.* of capital\*; a

\* Yet this great return did not hinder the St. Domingo planters from owing the French merchants, backward as they were in giving credit, nearly eight millions and a half sterling, when the troubles

return of which we have but *one* British instance in evidence, and that only for four remarkable years. Now, suppose a “dashing planter,” fascinated by this *highest* recorded return, were to purchase a plantation *constantly* yielding it, and to determine on making a rapid fortune by the system of “buying and burying,” without rearing any Slaves; what would be the upshot of his speculations: interest as above?

At *three* per cent. compound interest.

Present money sunk in the purchase	-	-	£ 100·00
Present value of 12l. labour-annuity for 7 years to come,			
is by Mr. Smart's fourth table	-	-	74·76
<i>Present loss</i> , on every 100l. sunk,	(25l. 4s. 9d.)	-	<u>£ 25·24</u>

Here the years' purchase,  $8\frac{1}{3}$ , is not contained in the following table. The nearest (greater) is  $8\frac{1}{2}$ , against which we find, in the three per cent. column, 9 years 350 days, which, of course, exceeds the truth; but  $9\frac{1}{2}$  years, by Mr. Smart's fourth table, appears to fall short of it. Now, as this case plainly requires more exactness than any of the preceding, or than can be expected from the tables, which reach only half years, it will be proper to go more strictly to work,

troubles in that colony commenced, in 1791. This sum, which exceeded by one million at least the debt due to G. Britain by all North America, in 1776--was probably, like the debts of our sugar planters, chiefly due for new Negroes. For, in the three years ending in 1791, no fewer than 60 000 were introduced, being above a seventh of the former number of Slaves (405,000) while the whites exceeded not 34,500 in all! Was not this enormous importation of injured and disaffected men, *of itself*, an adequate cause both of the embarrassment of the St. Domingo planters, and of their final destruction? See St. Venant, pp. 53, 81, 473.

By

By Mr. Simpson's third theorem \*, we find that the period of labour which the Slaves *ought* to fulfil, in this case, to refund the money invested, with three per cent. compound interest, is *nine years and 267 days*. For, by his first theorem, the present value of a 12*l.* annuity, for that time and at that rate, is exactly 100*l.*

At four per cent., compound interest.

Present money, sunk in the purchase of the estate	-	£100
Present value of 12 <i>l.</i> the labour annuity, for 7 years to come, by Mr. Smart's fourth table	-	<u>72</u>
Present loss, on every 100 <i>l.</i> sunk	-	<u>£ 28</u>

Here it will be found, by Mr. Simpson's third theorem, that the period of indemnifying, efficient labour, is *ten years and 123 days*. For, by his first theorem, the present value of 12*l.* annuity, for that time, at four per cent., is exactly 100*l.*

But, it may here be said, that, by our own account, 7 years, the period of the actual labour of purchased Slaves is the average between 0, which represents their immediate death, and 14 years, the utmost extent of their labouring life; and that 9 years, 267 days, the period of indemnifying labour at 3 per cent. (to drop the period at 4 per cent.) do not so far overpass the average, but that the Slaves *may* fulfil it. This hope, however, would be more sanguine than reasonable. For, as before observed, *purchased* Slaves, in order to keep the buyer from loss, must not only fulfil their own period of labour, but that of their dead companions. Thus, if five Slaves are bought, they ought *together* to make up (5 times 9

\* In his Algebra, at the bottom of the 238th page, 4th edit.

years, 267 days, or) above 48 years of labour. If one of them die in the seasoning, the surviving four will have to labour efficiently above 12 years each; and, if two die, each of three survivors must labour efficiently above 16 years. Now, if our objector, still contend that purchased Slaves may average even these last periods of labour, he may have it in his own way, provided he take along with him, that, even then, the purchaser would have nothing but a paltry 3 per cent. compound interest for his money, his trouble, and his risk. But I would yield him the point for a better reason, namely, that Slaves, if they average from 12 to 16 years of effective labour, will, in all probability, supply their own mortality by the births. Then indeed, the 12*l.* a year, instead of being a most hazardous labour-annuity, received with one hand, and paid away with the other for new Negroes, would be a *real*, clear income. The plantation would be a very flourishing one; and the proprietor might justly tell us, that he had nothing to do with us and our calculations, being happily beyond their reach \*. All that I insist upon is, that even the singularly great labour annuity of 12*l.* on every 100*l.* invested in a plantation, would not only be wholly swallowed up, but leave the proprietor a ruined man; if, while his gangs yield an average of but 7 years of labour, he should attempt to keep up their numbers entirely by purchase. This will

\* S. Venant's plantation in St. Domingo, which he calls the finest in the New World, must have cleared above 13 per cent. if he kept up his gang without purchase, as he probably did; for he says (p. 336) that he *settled* it with less mortality, than is common in *old* estates.

appear still more clearly from the answer to the next question.

*Question 7.* If a “planter of the old school” should attempt to keep up his gang entirely by purchasing Slaves who, one with another, yield him only 7 years of effectual service, what labour-annuity ought he to receive on every 100*l.* sunk on his Slaves and the property they actuate, in order that he may get back his capital, and 3 per cent. compound interest, within the seven years?

By Mr. Smart’s fifth table, the annuity which 100*l.* will purchase, for 7 years, at 3 per cent. compound interest, is 16·05*l.*, or 16*l.* 1*s.* the answer.

Or, dividing 100*l.* by 6·23 the present value of 1*l.* annuity, for 7 years to come, at 3 per cent. by Mr. Smart’s fourth table, the quotient is 16·05*l.*, or *sixteen pounds one shilling*, the answer, as before. To prove this :

By Mr. Smart’s third table, the amount of 16·05*l.* annuity, in 7 years, at 3 per cent. compound interest, is 122·98*l.*, or 122*l.* 19*s.* 7*d.* ; which, by his first table, is also the amount of 100*l.* principal, in the same time, and at the same rate.

If from this amount, 122·98*l.*, we subtract the principal 100*l.* the remainder 22·98*l.* will be the interest, and this divided by 7, gives 3·28, being nearly the annual simple interest per cent. gained ; which wants 2·72 or 2*l.* 14*s.* 5*d.* of 6*l.* per cent. the lowest legal interest, in the West Indies !

In

In other words, on the conditions of this last question, a labour-annuity of even 16*l.* 1*s.* wants about 2*l.* 14*s.* 5*d.* of yielding 6 per cent. simple interest.

*Question 8.* The other conditions of the last question remaining, What ought to be the labour-annuity, in order that the proprietor may get 6 per cent. simple interest on his capital; or, in order that every 100*l.* of that capital may amount to 142*l.* in 7 years?

Divide 142*l.* by 7.66, the amount of 1*l.* annuity in 7 years, at 3 per cent. (by Mr. Smart's third table) and the quotient 18.53 will be the answer, showing that, in this case, the labour-annuity sought must be somewhat more than *eighteen and a half* per cent.

I must defer some reflections on these calculations, and the conclusion of this whole argument, to another opportunity. In the mean time,

I am, &c. W. D.

\* \* \* At 219, I briefly quoted Dr. Price to show that Slave-buyers were not the only persons who suffered by speculating in annuities. A larger quotation from that celebrated author, to the same effect, will profitably fill up a space afforded by the necessity of printing the table on opposite pages;—a quotation well calculated, *mutatis mutandis*, to stimulate the buyers of Slaves to examine carefully the grounds of their speculations.

“Since the publication,” says Dr. P. “in three former editions, of the observations in the preceding section, almost all the societies mentioned in it, convinced of the insufficiency and pernicious tendency of their plans, have

have dissolved themselves, and distributed among their subscribers the money they had paid ; with such interest or profits as remained, after deducting the expences of management ; and there are now left, within my knowledge, only two of these societies—the *Amicable* and the *Laudable Societies for the Benefit of Age*. The first of these societies finding, upon examination, that instead of an annuity of 26*l.* they could not in reality afford to pay a higher annuity than 8*l.* determined, with great fairness, to leave it to the option of all their members, either to continue their contributions, with a view to this reduced annuity, or to take back all they had paid and withdraw. Near two hundred members having chosen the former, the society now consists of *them*, and therefore can scarcely be in any danger.—The other society has also sunk the annuity it promised from 44*l.* to 24*l.* ; but it is certain that it cannot permanently pay to all its members a greater annuity than 15*l.* I should lose too much time, were I to give an account of the calculations which prove this. He that would see it demonstrated with all possible clearness, should consult a tract published in 1777, by Mr. Dale, intitled, *A Supplement to Calculations, &c.* No person who understands common arithmetic can avoid being convinced by the evidence offered in this tract ; nor can any *honest* man avoid being shocked by the narrative it contains of the *obstinacy with which the majority of this society have persevered in error*, contrary to the efforts of the more respectable part of the society, and *in defiance of reason, justice, and humanity !*” Price on Annuities, &c. vol. 1. p. 144, ed. 4.



**THE SLAVE-BUYER'S MONITOR**; being A TABLE showing how long a SLAVE, bought for a number of years purchase of his clear average earnings, ought to labour effectively, to refund the capital sunk on him and the property he

Yrs purch. given for £ s d	At 2 pr. ct. slave must work for	At 2½ pr. ct. slave must work for	At 3 pr. ct. Slave must work for	At 4 pr. ct. slave must work for	At 4½ pr. ct. slave must work for	At 5 pr. ct. slave must work for
Yrs Days	Yrs Days	Yrs Days	Yrs Days	Yrs Days	Yrs Days	Yrs Days
1	1 7	1 9	1 11	1 13	1 15	1 17
1½	1 196	1 200	1 204	1 207	1 211	1 215
2	2 22	2 28	2 34	2 40	2 46	2 52
2½	2 215	2 224	2 235	2 245	2 251	2 260
3	3 40	3 51	3 70	3 82	3 95	3 108
3½	3 243	3 259	3 275	3 292	3 309	3 326
4	4 77	4 97	4 119	4 140	4 163	4 186
4½	4 278	4 304	4 331	4 358	5 22	5 51
5	5 117	5 140	5 165	5 216	5 252	5 289
5½	5 323	5 362	6 37	6 79	6 122	6 168
6	6 166	6 212	6 261	6 311	6 364	7 55
6½	7 12	7 66	7 24	7 164	7 247	7 314
7	7 225	7 289	7 356	8 62	8 137	8 217
7½	8 76	8 149	8 227	8 311	9 34	9 129
8	8 294	9 13	9 104	9 200	9 304	10 51
8½	9 149	9 246	9 350	10 97	10 217	10 348
9	10 8	10 118	10 236	11	11 136	11 290
9½	10 234	10 458	11 126	11 274	12 69	12 245
10	11 98	11 257	12 24	12 191	13 9	13 212
10½	11 330	12 121	12 292	13 115	13 324	14 194
11	12 200	13 9	13 200	14 48	14 286	15 190
11½	13 72	13 266	14 115	14 354	15 259	16 203
12	13 313	14 12	15 36	15 305	16 246	17 234
12½	14 193	15 64	15 329	16 265	17 246	18 285
13	15 75	15 335	16 204	17 235	18 261	19 358
13½	15 326	16 245	17 206	18 216	19 292	21 90
14	16 215	17 163	18 156	19 209	20 340	22 215
14½	17 108	18 85	19 115	20 215	22 43	24 5
15	18 4	19 12	20 82	21 234	23 132	25 195
15½	18 269	19 311	21 59	22 267	24 245	27 60
16	19 174	20 251	22 45	23 316	26 18	28 336
16½	20 82	21 197	23 41	25 16	27 185	30 500
17	20 359	22 150	24 49	26 100	29 19	32 329
17½	21 275	23 110	25 63	27 204	30 255	35 68
18	22 190	24 77	26 99	28 329	32 167	37 266
18½	23 121	25 52	27 143	30 113	34 126	40 216
19	24 52	26 35	28 20	31 288	36 141	43 318
19½	24 351	27 26	29 27	33 128	38 221	47 256
20	25 291	28 26	31	35	41 13	52 114

he actuates; compound interest at  $2\frac{1}{2}\%$  per cent. per annum, being allowed both on the capital so sunk, and on his annual earnings (or labour-annuity) as they arise.

CAVEAT EMPITOR!!

Yrs. purch. given for Slave, &c.	At 5 pr. ct. Slave must work for	At 6 pr. ct. Slave must work for	At 7 pr. ct. Slave must work for	At 8 pr. ct. Slave must work for	At 9 pr. ct. Slave must work for	At 10 pr. ct. Slave must work for
Yrs. Days	Yrs. Days	Yrs. Days	Yrs. Days	Yrs. Days	Yrs. Days	Yrs. Days
1	1 19	1 23	1 27	1 30	1 34	1 38
1 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 218	1 226	1 233	1 241	1 249	1 257
2	2 58	2 71	2 84	2 97	2 111	2 125
2 $\frac{1}{2}$	2 269	2 288	2 308	2 328	2 350	3 7
3	3 121	3 148	3 177	3 207	3 238	3 271
3 $\frac{1}{2}$	3 344	4 17	4 56	4 98	4 142	4 190
4	4 209	4 259	4 312	5 4	5 65	5 131
4 $\frac{1}{2}$	5 82	5 146	5 216	5 292	6 9	6 99
5	5 327	6 44	6 134	6 233	6 342	7 99
5 $\frac{1}{2}$	6 216	6 319	7 68	7 195	7 339	8 138
6	7 113	7 241	8 19	8 181	9 4	9 224
6 $\frac{1}{2}$	8 20	8 176	8 354	9 196	10 75	11 5
7	8 303	9 127	9 348	10 241	11 196	12 231
7 $\frac{1}{2}$	9 231	10 95	11 1	11 331	13 15	14 199
8	10 172	11 81	12 49	13 100	14 282	16 324
8 $\frac{1}{2}$	11 125	12 88	13 131	14 294	16 294	19 330
9	12 92	13 119	14 254	16 197	19 99	24 58
9 $\frac{1}{2}$	13 75	14 177	16 60	18 198	22 149	31 157
10	14 75	15 265	17 290	20 333	26 262	
10 $\frac{1}{2}$	15 94	17 23	19 219	23 296	33 240	
11	16 154	18 188	21 264	27 201	53 160	
11 $\frac{1}{2}$	17 196	20 36	24 59	32 299		
12	18 285	21 309	27 32	41 301		
12 $\frac{1}{2}$	20 38	23 289	30 268			
13	21 189	25 360	35 215			
13 $\frac{1}{2}$	23 13	28 183	42 317			
14	24 247	31 164	57 299			
14 $\frac{1}{2}$	26 168	35 5				
15	28 151	39 189				
15 $\frac{1}{2}$	30 209	45 233				
16	32 360	55 88				
16 $\frac{1}{2}$	35 264	79 12				
17	38 322					
17 $\frac{1}{2}$	42 226					
18	47 71					
18 $\frac{1}{2}$	53 33					
*19	61 146					
19 $\frac{1}{2}$	75 222					

Mr. Smart, in his 4to page, has carried his table to 25 years' purchase, but our 8vo will only admit of 20 years, which however appear, from the table itself, to be more than sufficient for the purpose intended.

Although the use of this table is plain, from the foregoing calculations, it may not be improper to insert two examples, just recollected; supposing, as before, the capital sunk, and also the clear annual earnings of the Slaves, as they arise, to be improved at the small rate of 3 per cent. comp. int.

Ex. 1. In

Ex. 1. In the P. C. Report, p. 780, the whole British property, fixed and moveable, in the West Indies, is valued at 12 years purchase. Now, to know whether or not a plantation bought on these terms, is likely to yield a profit, we must inquire how long the Slaves upon it *ought* to clear (one-twelfth of 100% or) 8*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* on every 100*l.* invested; in order to refund the capital, and 3 per cent. compound interest. Look for 12 years purchase, in the first column of this table; and, on the same line, in the 3 per cent. Column, you will find 15 years, 36 days, the period of labour sought. But 15 years, 36 days is about the average of the *lives* of the Slaves, and greatly exceeds their average period of efficient labour. The purchaser, therefore, has paid for much more labour than he will ever receive from the Slaves he finds on the plantation, and consequently, will be a great loser by them, if they leave not progeny to fill up their places, as they drop off.

The loss will be greater still, on Slaves bought to supply the mortality; of whom about 2 in 5 die in the seasoning, (see p. 206.) Five new Negroes *ought* to fulfil (five times 15 years, 36 days, or) 75  $\frac{1}{2}$  years of effective labour. But as only 3 survive the seasoning, each of these must labour efficiently for (one third of 75  $\frac{1}{2}$ , or) above 25 years. But this being plainly impossible, it follows that a plantation bought for 12 years purchase, must be an unprofitable bargain, if the Slaves do not keep up, or rather augment their numbers by the births. But, if they do this, the clear profit will be 8 and one third per cent. which exceeds what Mr. Long and Mr. Steele call a saving profit, and is nearly double the average return of sugar estates.

It is plain from this table, that at any higher rate of improvement than 3 per cent. the period of efficient labour, which the Slaves *ought* to fulfil will be greater.

This valuation of 12 years purchase, is ascribed to Mr. Chalmers, of the Treasury, whose ability and accuracy in calculating cannot be doubted. But he is not properly answerable for his *data*; and we have no room for any remarks on them.

Ex. 2. But Mr. Edwards, (vol. 2. p. 388) referring to Mr. C's statement, "thinks that, in the sale of W. Indian estates. 10 years purchase is more common;"—forgetting that (at p. 260) he had stated the sugar planters' profits at 7 per cent; but "without charging a shilling for making good the decrease of the Negroes," and other heavy expences. Even 7 per cent. implies above 14 years purchase. But at 10 years, we have shown in quest. 5, a great loss, unless the births keep up or increase the numbers.

The only way to avoid such losses, I will repeat it again and again, is to abstain altogether from buying Slaves, and to enable the Slaves already on the plantations to *increase*; for the bare keeping up of the numbers by the births, continually exposes a plantation to be ruined by the first hurricane, or epidemic disease, or famine which occurs.

But it is not more strange than true, that "in the West Indies, the capitals which should have been employed in the preservation and maintenance of the enslaved, have been expended in the purchase of more Slaves!!"—"A few figures of arithmetic sufficiently expose that losing system," &c. Gaisford's Essay, printed 1811, p. 84. His calculation is very simple and convincing, but quite different from ours. "If however, reiterated examples will not convince men of their errors, we must say, with the old Latin author, *Quos Deus vult perdere, prius dementat.*" Long, vol. 2. p. 471.

## LETTER IV.

*Important conclusions from the foregoing calculations.*

None of our data questionable but the period of actual effective labour.—Popular error about W. Indian profits.—With less than  $18\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. labour-annuity, bought Slaves yield not legal interest on capital sunk.—No W. Indian produce can bear the expence of supply ingmortality by purchase.—Our argument concludes, That the buying system is ruinous, and that the planter's only resource is to breed, or rear his Slaves.—Reader warned against a capital mistake.—Plantations carried on chiefly by bred Slaves.—That it is cheaper to buy than to breed, a most pernicious vulgar error.—Expence and profit of tearing a Negro infant,—*Des maitres avides n'aiment pas à voir leurs Nègresses enceintes.*—A most intelligent planter shows the advantages of rearing Negroes.—Buyer, with large return, may be galloping to ruin, while Breeder with moderate, may be making money. Four-fifths of Slaves are Creoles, or natives of W Indies

DEAR SIR,

THE calculations already submitted to your view, depend entirely on the period of actual efficient labour fulfilled by purchased Slaves. This is the only element of those calculations, which can be doubted or questioned, when the annual return of a plantation is determinately expressed by a given rate per cent. Were it possible to prove that purchased Slaves, on an average, labour with productive and efficient vigour, for more than seven years, the resulting losses would indeed be reduced; but they would not be *extinguished*, unless it could be proved either that the annual returns are about four times as great as they really are, or else, as before observed, that purchased Slaves labour *effectively* much longer than people in their condition, or in almost any condition, can be expected to live!

The popular opinion about the profits of W. Indian plantations, is egregiously incorrect. Not to mention the common estimate, (now true in particular cases only) that the rum pays the ordinary current expences of a sugar plantation \*, new Negroes excepted, and several other prevailing mistakes, it is even not uncommon to talk of the gross returns as the neat profits †; thereby swelling the latter often to double the real amount. But it does not appear ever to have been alleged, since the prosperous days of the first sugar planters of Barbadoes, that in general any thing near 16 or 18½ per cent. on the capital, has been cleared on the real value of plantations ‡; and, in answering the 8th question, we have proved that, with less than the last mentioned labour-annuity, a planter who should attempt to supply his mortality wholly by purchase, could not obtain the ordinary rate of W. Indian interest for his money.

But neither sugar nor any other article, can bear the ruinous expence of new Negroes.—Indigo is apparently

\* P. C. Report, p. 803. The production of every cwt. of sugar now costs 20s. 10d. sterl. in Jamaica, and 19s. 6d. in the other islands, over and above the neat proceeds of the rum. See p. 3 of Report of the Comuit. on the commercial State of the W. Indian Colonies, July 1807.

† See Edwards, vol. 2. pp. 257, 260.

‡ Mr. Gaisford, however, p. 103, quotes the Council of Jamaica as stating, in 1789, that “while some were gaining 15 or 20 per cent. others were losing as much;” but that “the average profit of the whole capital embarked in that island, was only *four* per cent.” Now it is plain, from what we have said, that if the Slaves on the prosperous estates, were not kept up entirely by the births, a part only of the 15 or 20 per cent. was real gain;—and a *very small* part only, if the Slaves were kept up chiefly by purchase.

the most profitable of them all. We are seriously told that every able Negro on an indigo-work raises, or rather *did* raise, to the value of 75*l.* sterl. in that article; in those fortunate years when the planter happened to draw a capital prize in that agricultural lottery \*. But the 75*l.* was only the *gross* return; from which the value of the Negro himself, when he could be bought for less money, was often to be deducted. For all indigo planters, both French and English, agree that "an alarming mortality constantly attended the process" of making the article, in the West Indies†. To this fatal cause, we are chiefly to attribute its failure, when Slaves were comparatively cheap, both in Jamaica and St. Domingo; in which last colony, however, the *gross* return does not appear to have exceeded 44*l.* 2*s.* 4*d.* sterl. per Negro, in the best years. In 1754, St. Domingo is said to have contained 3379 indigo-works ‡, of which in 1774, above four-fifths had been converted to other uses; and the chief reason, in all probability, was that, in the intervening twenty years, the price of Slaves had been increased nearly four fold§. In 1789, the St. Domingo planters had almost intirely abandoned the culture of indigo ||: and thus an article which, at first sight, appears to justify, in an œconomical view, the purchase of Negroes, turns out to be a powerful monitor against it.

\* Long, vol. 3. p. 680; Edwards, vol. 2. p. 286.

† Edwards, *ibid.*; Renny, p. 151. ‡ Justamond's Raynal, vol. 4: p. 236. My confidence in this *fine writer* is not great. But D'Auberteuil says that, in 1774, the indigo-works in St. Domingo were reduced to 600, Tom. I. pp. 61, 72.

§ D'Auberteuil, tom. 1. pp. 243, 321.

|| Wimpfien, pp. 68, 170; St. Venant, p. 274.

I had, with very considerable labour, extended my enquiries, not only to indigo, but to cotton, coffee, and cacao, about which, you know, our information is not so abundant and satisfactory as what we possess respecting sugar. But having since found that a labour-annuity, for seven years, of no less than 20*l.* 5*s.* 8*d.* without interest, or of 18*l.* 10*s.* with compound interest at 3 per cent. leaves not more than a clear return of 6 per cent. on the capital, after supplying the mortality intirely by purchase \*—having since found this, I say, it will be needless to trouble you with what I have written respecting the returns of the "minor staples," none of which can be pretended to *average* the labour-annuities just mentioned. I shall therefore extend to all plantations whatever, the grand proposition which, in my first letter, was confined to sugar plantations only.

To sum up this important argument:—it has been shown that, in strictness, the average period of effective field-labour, actually performed by *bought* Slaves, cannot be estimated at so much as seven years. See p. 204, and the note on it.

That, calculating even on this over-rated assumption, and on the other average data, furnished by the planters themselves, *bought* Slaves, in order to refund the money sunk on them and the property they actuate, ought, one with another, to labour efficiently for *thirty-one years*. See the answer to the first question.

That, in order to clear 6 per cent. the lowest West Indian rate of interest, on the capital, by the labour of *bought* Slaves, it appears, from the answer to the se-

\* See pp. 218, 236 above.

cond question, that they *ought* to labour efficiently for *twenty-three years and a half*.

That a purchaser of Slaves, in order to get back his money in seven years, *ought* to have a clear labour-annuity of *sixteen pounds one shilling*, on every 100*l.* vested in the Slaves and the property they actuate. See the answer to the seventh question.

And that in order to replace his capital with a profit of 6 per cent. in seven years, over and above keeping up his gang, he ought to receive a clear labour-annuity of *eighteen pounds ten shillings*, or of above *twenty pounds five shillings*, without interest. See the answer to the eighth question, and p. 218 above.

Compound interest, at only *three* per cent. being allowed throughout, on the money invested, and also on the labour-annuities (except the last mentioned) as they arise.

But all these results being both morally and physically impossible, in the present or any recent state of things, or in any state of things which can be rationally expected in future, it follows,

*That the personal labour of bought Slaves, in general, African or West Indian, on sugar plantations, or any other plantations, does not and cannot replace the capital sunk on them and the property, which they alone actuate, or render productive:—which was to be proved. See the end of my first letter, p. 199.*

Now, there are but two possible ways of keeping up the number and strength of a gang of Slaves, namely by purchase, and by the births. The former has been proved by calculation, to say nothing of the experience of many unhappy purchasers, to be not hurtful and  
absurd



absurd only, but altogether destructive and ruinous and therefore,

*No resource remains to those West Indian proprietors, who have not already seen the fatal error of purchasing, but so to alleviate the labour of their people by the help of cattle, and so to improve their whole condition, physical and moral, as to secure their natural INCREASE\* ;—for, if they should but barely keep up their numbers, the plantations may be suddenly ruined by those fatal epidemics and scarcities which occasionally thin the population of other countries, as well as by those calamities to which the West Indian islands are peculiarly exposed.*

To prevent a capital mistake, I must repeat once more, that I all along suppose the gangs to be kept up by purchase alone, unaided by any natural increase. This supposition as we have seen, is not only too near the literal truth ; but if it were not, it would be necessary, in order to exhibit the simple and unmodified effects of purchasing Slaves. Now, what is true in the extreme, is true also, proportionally, in the degree. Were a planter to depend wholly on purchase, all our calculations show that he would be ruined in a few years ; and if but partly, his approach to ruin would be in proportion to such part, or even in a greater proportion. For fatal maladies have been often introduced into plantations, not only by the infection of Africans

\* To the question, What will be done with the supernumeraries, if the islands should become overstocked with Negroes ? Mr. Steele has already given a reply, at p. 134 above ; and on an even as yet only *in posse*, it is needless to add any thing to what he has there remarked.

from Slave-ships, but of Negroes levied on for debt, when they become sickly in gaol, before "the law's delay" permits them to be brought to sale \*.

We have proved it to be the planter's interest to rear his Slaves, by evincing the absurdity of the contrary practice. We have not explicit *data* for a direct proof; but our indirect process is sufficiently convincing. Our evidence indeed contains numerous instances of estates keeping up their gangs by the births alone†; but it also informs us that many planters thought it cheaper to buy than to rear their supplies‡. This notion however must be grossly erroneous, if there be any truth in our calculations, and if it be also true, as we shall presently see it is, that where the raising of provisions is made a serious part of plantation business, the raising of Negroes costs little more than that common attention which all children require. On this subject, our information is but scanty. Even gentlemen who are sufficiently communicative on many points, disappoint our hopes on this. Mr. Long§ agrees with us in inculcating, though on different grounds, the necessity of substituting breeding for purchase, but without stating the comparative expence of the two systems. Mr. Edwards, "good easy man," only re-

\* See P. C. Report, p. 278; and Abridg. Evid. before H. of Commons, No. 4. pp. 21, 89, 108, 124. Even the sudden mixture of healthy strangers among a healthy people, has been known to generate disease. See Martin's Account of the Western Islands of Scotland.

† P. C. Report, pp. 271, 316, 457, 459, 460, 474; Abst. Evid. before H. of Commons, ch. 11.

‡ Abridg. Evid. before H. of Commons, No. 3. p. 84; and No. 4. pp. 32, 43, 54, 61, 69, 72, 76, 118; Collins's Practical Rules, p. 131. \*

§ Hist. of Jamaica, vol. 2. p. 437.

marks briefly, not to say dryly, that "a child just born is valued at 5*l.*;"—whether currency or sterling, he does not say; and probably did not know, any more than your humble servant; for he copied the remark, or might have copied it, from an author who wrote above fifty years before him; as this last certainly did, from a third writer thirty years anterior to his copyist\*. Was the price of infants then, thought the same for above eighty years, while that of adults increased three or four fold? Or did nobody think at all about the matter? This is a notable instance, among others which might be given, of the attention formerly paid to the rearing of Slaves, in the British West Indies!

The only explicit statement I can find of the expence and profit of rearing Negro children, is that of M. D'Auberteuil†, who says that labour worth about 9*l.* sterling‡, is lost, during the last three months of a female's pregnancy, and the fifteen months of nursing. But, he adds, that her new-born infant is already worth half that sum; that at ten years of age, his value will be 44*l.* sterl. and at fifteen, 60*l.*; having, at this last period, earned for his owner above 35*l.*;—the produce, says M. D'A. of the 9*l.* sunk by the mother's pregnancy and nursing! This we may add is

\* Compare vol. 2. p. 128 of Edwards, who published in 1793, with p. 312 of a New Hist. of Jamaica, in 13 letters, printed in 1740, and vol. 2. p. 136, of Oldmixon's Brit. Emp. in America, first published in 1710. This last author says "that every pickaniny, or infant Negro, is valued at 6*l.* (Qu. ? curr. or sterl.) at a month old." But then he was in comparatively little danger from the *Tetanus*, or locked jaw, which is greatest in the first fortnight.

† Torn. 2. pp. 64, 66.

‡ Allowing 34 currency livres to the pound sterling.

an ample return to the French planter even allowing, as may be expected, that one half of the children do not live to be useful \* ; and an ample return also to the British planter, though his profits do not nearly equal those of the St. Domingo man ;—and therefore he ought to be the more attentive to his Negro children. —“ Mais des maitres avides,” says M. D’A. “ n’aient pas à voir leur Nègresses enceintes.” —“ Si les Nègresses se font souvent avorter, c’est presque toujours la faute de leurs maitres. Ils n’ont pas le droit de les en punir ; parce qu’il n’y a que l’excès de la tyrannie, qui puisse étouffer en elles les sentimens maternels.” —“ Il y a des hommes barbares, en qui la cruauté est fortifiée par l’avarice, et l’avarice ne prévoit rien !” I forbear translating these passages which, I fear, are as applicable to British owners as to French ones.

Dr. Collins † brings home the French author’s statements, *mutatis mutandis*, to our own islands, and our own times. “ The motives, says he, for attending to

\* See Price’s Annuities, vol. 1. p. 266, edit. 4. and the tables of the probability of life in the 2d vol. In P. C. Rep. pp. 351, 358, 373, 429, half the Negro children are said to be reared ; but probably without knowing that only about half the infants, even in the healthful town of Northampton, survive their tenth year. Under the old bad system, one fourth of the Negro infants are carried off, in the first fortnight, by the locked jaw alone ; owing to causes, inherent in that system, and which are easily removed by better treatment. See P. C. Rep. p. 277 ; Abridg. Evid. before H. of Commons, No. 4, p. 44 ; Notes on the Two Jamaica Reports, p. 53, et seqq. On the condition and sufferings of the Pregnant Women, see Dr. Collins’s Practical Rules, p. 135.

† Practical Rules for the management, &c. of Slaves, printed 1811, p. 149 ; see also p. 42,

the rearing of Creoles, are numerous and urgent ; but I content myself with those derived from principles of œconomy ; for while they are in their infancy, the expence bestowed on them passes off so insensibly as not to be felt : your gang is thus recruited without sensible disbursements \*. It does not require more than five or six years before they are capable of labour ; little indeed at that tender age, yet sufficient to defray the expences of their own support. In their adult age, they become invaluable, as it is from that class of Negroes, that you generally draw your domestics, drivers, boilers, and tradesmen of every description ; and it is upon them that you must principally depend for the work of your plantation. But for a moment, lay interest aside, and ascend to a higher motive. Contemplate a creation to which your cares have been instrumental ! Does opulence possess any delight comparable to it ?”

The foregoing calculations suggest a variety of reflections ; some of which might be useful to gentlemen concerned in West Indian property. For example, how forcibly do they illustrate our old distinction of *apparent* and *real* profits ? The answers to the fifth and sixth questions, show that a planter may be receiving very large returns, and that yet, if he buy the whole or most of his Negroes, he may be all the while galloping to ruin ; while another planter who gets not

\* Hence many Negro children are reared by white people who have little or no land, or other property, but a female Slave or two ; also by the small settlers called in Barbadoes, ten-acre-men. See Dean Nickolls's Letter, p. 38, edit. 4. ; Abst. Evid. before H. of Commons, p. 107, Edin. edit. also page 156 above.

perhaps above half of those returns, but keeps up his gang by the births, may be making money. The man with "the large crops and dead-lists," will soon be involved in debt, and yet if, as is probable enough, he mistake a mere labour-annuity for a clear income, he will not be able to tell why or how; but will be likely to drive his Negroes harder than ever, and to blunder and fight on with creditors and lawyers and marshals and Slave-merchants, till the last stage of an execution or a mortgage seal his doom. There is little hope of a planter escaping this last stage of misfortune, when he has once fairly entered on the first. Gen. Matthew, Governor of Grenada \*, not to mention other respectable witnesses, states that "very few sugar estates, when loaded with a very heavy debt, have been known to get rid of such debt, or to pay more than six per cent. on the money lent on them." How should they? we may ask; after having shown, in our second calculation above, that no sugar estate can clear six per cent. over and above keeping up the gang entirely by purchase. Thus then, when mortgagees in possession become the proprietors of plantations, we should first know whether or not the gangs were kept up wholly, or chiefly by purchase, before we suspect them of those undue proceedings of which they are sometimes accused †.—If after all, it should be asked, by any *inattentive* reader, How the plantations are carried on at all, if the buying of Slaves be so very ruinous as we

\* In P.C. Report, p. 389.—My excellent friend, Gov. Hay of Barbadoes, used jocularly to call some sugar plantations "Irish Estates;" as often requiring more support than they gave.

† Abridg. Evid. before H. of Commons, No. 4. pp. 120, 122.

represent?

represent? the answer is, Chiefly by Slaves born and bred in the islands, and on the very plantations which they cultivate; for the last alone contribute surely and solidly to the prosperity of their proprietors. If bought Slaves ever do this, it can only be in uncommonly favourable circumstances, good seasons, on cheap and fortunate purchases, and not generally and permanently: the thing is impossible, unless they supply their own numbers in the natural way.

Slowly as imported and bought Slaves generally breed, all the islands have been settled long enough to give their posterity a great preponderancy, in point of numbers. We have seen that on 22 plantations, taken promiscuously, in the old island of Barbadoes, A. D. 1788, only about one in seven of the Slaves were natives of Africa. In the new island of Dominica, in the same year, four in nine were already "country-born;" and it was then believed that, in the whole British islands, these last were about four times as numerous as the Africans\*; and their proportion must now be much greater:—clearly evincing that, if there were no want of good treatment, there would be no want of Creole, or native West-Indian Slaves.

It may be said, that West Indian estates are often purchased, in bad times, for one-half or one-third of their value, and paid for by instalments, or by the remission of debts, and not for the whole value, in ready money, as our calculations suppose. I admit the facts, but deny any inference *permanently* favourable

\* P. C. Report, pp 459, 773; and Suppl. to ditto, p. 39; Obj. to Abolition with Ans. p 73, and its Introd. p. 19; also p 205 foregoing.

to the habitual purchaser of Slaves. For suppose at once, that he gets the plantation for nothing, by a testamentary deed, or by inheritance, and supply his gang wholly, or chiefly, by purchase : if the first set of Slaves die off without refunding the whole capital, much more nearly than appears from any of our calculations, a great part of that capital will be thereby lost ; and the seasoning-mortality will make the loss yet greater on every succeeding set, whether bought all at once, or occasionally, as *thought* to be wanted—unless, as before intimated, a supply of Slaves could be constantly procured for a small part of their real or current value.

In short on every admissible supposition, but that of keeping up or increasing the numbers by the births, the purchase of Slaves is pregnant with ruin. “There’s Death in the pot” ; and the only sound counsel which can be offered to the planters respecting the Slave-market, is that of the Royal Philosopher, on “the path of the wicked :”—“Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.” I am, &c.

W. D.

## LETTER V.

### *Historical Sketch of the Effects of the Slave-system.*

S. Carolina suspends Slave-trade, to get planters out of debt.—Mr. Long recommends same measure for Jamaica.—Six out of seven judgements in that island originate in buying Slaves — About 1650, muscovado sugar sold in London for about 6*l.* sterl. the cwt. and clayed for 9 and 10*l.*—but it soon fell,—and new Negroes also fell.—Sugar, in 1690, “unreasonably cheap,”—in 1693 worth but 6*s.* sterl. the cwt. in Jamaica,—in 1732, “a mere drug,” and sold in England for only 11*s.* sterl. the cwt.—

For



—For 70 years, to 1768, one-fourth of Jamaica exports to G. Britain, laid out on new Negroes.—In 20 years to 1791, there were 80,084 executions issued in that island, for 1,128,239*l.* ster*l.* annually, chiefly for new Negroes, being above half the value of the exports,—such executions being nearly double in number to the writs, in Middlesex, for 100*l.* and upwards.—First planters of Ceded Islands undone by buying Negroes.—Breeder*s* of Slaves rise on ruin*s* of Buyer*s*.—In British island*s*, Negroes *six* times as dear in 1797, as in 1697.—In French *ten* times as dear in 1790 as in 1690.

DEAR SIR,

THE statements communicated in my last, have been true for a very long period; but *how* long cannot perhaps be certainly known. The earliest complaint of the unprofitableness of new Negroes which I can find, was made, as intimated page 196 above, in 1730, nine years before the importation of them into S. Carolina was prohibited, to prevent the planters from injuring themselves by purchasing them. Such a law appears to have been contemplated by intelligent men, as a desirable measure, for Jamaica. We have already quoted Mr. Long as recommending it about the year 1768; and to him we may now add that unfortunate planter, but I believe worthy man, Mr. W. Beckford, who introduces what he says in favour of suppressing the Slave-trade for a few years, to relieve the embarrassed planters, with these words: "I do firmly believe, that out of the astonishing numbers of judgments that are annually obtained in Jamaica, on account of impunctuality of payment, at least six out of seven are substantiated from a hasty and improvident purchase of Slaves: and hence the ruinous expences of the law," &c.\* Mr. Beckford's work was

\* Beckford's Descriptive Account of Jamaica, vol. 2. p. 344.

published in 1790; and he does not appear to have read that of Mr. Long.

At an early, but only for a short period, bought Slaves appear to have earned returns which, in an economical view,\* justified their purchase. About 1650, eight or nine years after the introduction of the sugarcane into Barbadoes, able Negroes cost only about 28*l.* sterl. in that island; where each acre of canes averaged 3000 lb or about 2 hhds. of muscovado sugar, being four times as much as Jamaica produces in our own times. This muscovado was worth 28*s.* sterl. the cwt. in Barbadoes, and 5*l.* 18*s.* in London; and best clayed sugar brought, in this last market, 9*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* and even 10*l.* sterl. per cwt†. These prices were prodigious, considering the value of money in 1650. But they were soon reduced, by the rapid extension of the cultivation which they stimulated, in the junior colonies. For in 1668, muscovado was worth\*but 18*s.* sterl. in Barbadoes, and in a few years, it fell to 14*s.*†. Sir W. Petty observed, long before the year 1690, what has been remarkably verified in our own times, “that the overplanting of sugar had made it unreasonably cheap‡.” In 1693 it was worth but 6*s.* sterl. the cwt. in Jamaica §. And a probable effect of this depreciation of produce, was a depreciation of the producers; for,

\* Ligon, pp. 46, 85, 86, 92, 95, 96. P. C. Report, pp. 223, 226, 461; Edwards, vol. 1. p. 430; vol. 2. p. 436, from Sir J. Child. Oldmixon, Introduct. p. 18; and vol. 2. p. 153.

† Abridg. Plantation Laws, 1704, pp. 206, 276.

‡ Page 46 Polit. Arithm. printed 1690; but said in the *imprimatur*, to have been “long since writ.”

§ Long, vol. 1. p. 382. See also vol. 2. p. 551.—But Oldmixon, vol. 2. p. 163, says that “sugar in K. James [II’s] reign, sold for 20 and 21*s.* sterl. a hundred (neat) the coarsest of all for

for, about the same period, new Negroes averaged, in the islands, only 19*l.* sterl.\* or not half the price they brought in Ligon's time. In 1731, and the following year, sugar was "a mere drug" in England; selling for only 11*s.* sterl. the cwt. In 1733, (though the price rose to 13*s.* 6*d.*) Barbadoes was still said to be "reduced to a miserable state." In 1736, it was described as "a poor, declining colony;" and looked for relief, like the islands in general at present, to some wonder-working Act of Parliament;—as if any act but an act of effectual, internal reformation could permanently reduce the "vast expence they are necessarily at, in making their sugars†;" but which, in truth, *necessarily* attends the Slave-system, whatever be the article produced.

For nearly seventy years, ending in 1768, the new Negroes annually imported "for the use" of Jamaica, cost one-fourth of the value of the exports of that island to Great Britain‡. In the same colony, the executions for debts "six out of seven" as Mr. Beck-

17 and 18*s.* and the same sorts sell now, at 30 and 32*s.* They sold in K. William's reign for near 3*l.* sterl. and whites proportionably; which rates being occasioned by bad crops, storms, and captures, the planters must not expect to see again, unless the same accidents happen." At p. 170, he says that "100 pounds weight of sugar, is not worth above 12 or 14*s.* in time of peace."—In St. Domingo, "raw sugar which, in 1682, sold for 14 or 15 livres the quintal (or cwt) fell, in 1713, to 5 or 6." Wimpffen, p. 98. This is the lowest depression of the article I have any where met with; especially if they be currency livres, at 34 or 36 to the pound sterling, as I believe they are.

\* F. C. Report, p. 796. † See Caribbeana, vol. 1. pp. 67, 158, 174. Right of the W. Ind. Merchants to a double Monopoly, examined, p. 63. ‡ See the calculation, in Dean Nickolls's Letter, p. 51, edition 4.

ford says, originating in the Slave system, for twenty years ending in 1791, were 80,081, and amounted to 22,564,786*l.* sterl. or to 1,128,239*l.* annually; being above one half of 2,136,442*l.* the value, by the London prices current, of the *whole* exports of the island, in 1787, a year of average produce \*. To bring this to the English standard, we need only observe that this annual number of *executions* in Jamaica, is nearly double the annual number of *writs*, for 100*l.* sterl. and upwards, in Middlesex, and for a much greater value; though business is annually done in that county for a far greater amount than the whole property of Jamaica, fixed and moveable, great as it is †.

The first planters of the ceded islands must have been yet more deeply ingulphed in law and debt, than their Jamaica contemporaries; because, in proportion, more deeply concerned in the Slave-market. But the reserve natural to misfortune, having withheld from the public eye any authenticated accounts of their losses, we can only observe, in general, that their expenditure was very great, and their returns very small ‡, and that most of them were finally undone. Nearly the whole of the first black population of those islands may be

\* Proceedings of Jamaica Assembly, 1792, p. 50; Nickolls, p. 53; Edwards, vol. 1. p. 232; Gaistford, p. 103.

† Compare P. C.' Report, p. 779, with Colquhoun on the Police of the Metropolis, pp. 70, 393, 411, edit. 3.

‡ See Long, vol 1. pp. 526, 556, 578; Abridg. Evid. before H. of Commons, No. 4. p. 74; Atwood, pp. 73, 225. A respectable friend told me, above 30 years ago, that, for himself and his connections, he had expended about 200,000*l.* sterl. in forming sugar estates in Dominica; and that he would then gladly sell them for half that money.

said to have been imported from Africa; and it is certain that a very great number of them sank under the heavy labour of cutting down the woods\*. There is no reason to believe that the proportion of mortality was less in our ceded islands, than in St. Domingo, where, in five years ending in 1779, there was a "depopulation of 158,000, in consequence of clearing new lands†." In a word, there is no room to doubt that the ruin of the early settlers of the ceded islands was, in a very great degree, if not wholly, owing to the Slaves having died off, without refunding their purchase-money, and a reasonable profit.

The statements and evidence in the Parliamentary Report of July 1807, on the commercial state of the West Indian colonies, finishes this deplorable chronicle; every article of which is a proof of the general proposition established above, chiefly on other grounds—a proof that the Slave-trade has ruined the sugar colonies—irretrievably ruined them, unless the whole Slave-system should be very materially improved.

The powerful impulse given to popular opinion and mercantile enterprize by the prosperity and splendor of the early Slave-buyers of Barbadoes, has never ceased to operate during the long period now imperfectly treated of. The influence of that original impulse has been transmitted to our own times, by the success, real or apparent, of some individuals; though *all* the circumstances have been gradually altered, and several of them reversed. But from what has been stated, it

\* Abridg Evid before H. of Comm. No. 2. p. 186; No. 4. p. 74.

† Neckar, as quoted in Address on Abolition Bill, p. 27. See also D'Auberteuil; tom. 1. p. 70.

is plain that no part of that individual success is, or can be owing to the Slaves which have been purchased to supply the mortality of the gangs. It is rather to be viewed as an indirect consequence of that wretched management, followed by judicious economy. For the plantations of ruined Slave-buyers, falling into the hands of more prudent men, often their principal creditors, perhaps originally managers, or agents, for half the cost of their settlement, or less, these last succeeded of course. Obtaining, at an easy rate, "wells which they digged not, and vineyards which they planted not," such new proprietors could not but prosper, if they abstained from the "accursed thing" which blasts and withers the substance of all who touch it. But it would be too much to expect the generality of Slave-buyers, in the blindness of their speculations, to consider that, while all plantation-charges, and particularly that of bought Slaves, have been advancing, the price of produce, or at least of sugar, has been sinking, or not proportionally rising, till at last all hope of raising that important West Indian "staple," by the personal labour of *bought* Slaves has vanished for ever!

It would be interesting, as well as instructive, to trace the parallel progress of the value of produce and Slaves, through the period we have been considering. But the facts are too few for an accurate statement. They are also too vague, as not distinguishing the prices of new Negroes and seasoned ones, and of able labourers and the average of old and young. The early accounts of other plantation-charges, and of the contemporary prices of produce, are yet more defective. It appears however, that in 1698, new Negroes averaged

120*l.* sterl. in the islands\*, and in 1791, nearly *five* times as much, having risen 71 per cent. in the last sixteen years of this period, and 140 per cent. in twenty years, ending in 1774†. In 1788, grown people newly imported were worth, in Dominica, 76*l.* and when seasoned, 120*l.* sterl. ‡ which, by the way, implies that about one-third were lost in the seasoning. In 1797, new Negroes, old and young, sold for 70*l.* sterl. each, their price having increased nearly *six* fold in the preceding century §. In 1807, when the *African* branch of the Slave-trade was abolished, I have been told, that prime new Negroes brought in Jamaica, 80*l.* sterl. which was also about the price in 1811 ||.

In St. Domingo, new Negroes were almost *four* times as dear in 1774 as in 1754, and *ten* times as dear in 1790 as in 1690 ¶.

After all, perhaps, it would not be quite impracticable, by help of the statements of Ligon, Blome, &c. and of Sir Geo. Shuckburgh's excellent chronological table of the value of money, (in the *Phil. Trans.* of 1798) to form something like a comparative estimate

\* In 1698, La Brue says men-slaves were bought on the coast of Africa for 20 livres, *in goods*; and, in 1682, according to Le Maire, for 8 livres, and often for 4 or 5 quarts of brandy. Astley's Collection, vol. 2. pp. 70, 252

† P. C. Report, p. 796; Long, vol. 1. pp. 382, 520; Edwards, vol. 2. p. 484.

‡ P. C. Report, p. 414.

§ P. C. Report, p. 770, combined with Pinckard, vol. 2, p. 328; and vol. 3. pp. 353, 409.

|| Gaisford's Essay, p. 85. The reader may amuse himself by calculating the *loss* on this bargain; remembering that the 80*l.* sterl. is but one half of the capital sunk, and that two fifths of the new Negroes die in the seasoning. See pp. 200, 206 foregoing.

¶ D'Auberteuil, tom. 1. p. 321; Wimpffen, p. 72.

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of the profits cleared by the early planters, and their successors of the present day. But such an estimate would be troublesome, and not free from conjecture; and we know already more than enough to foresee that the result would only be a new source of mortification to our contemporaries; overwhelmed, as they unfortunately are, with calamities, partly owing to war, high taxes, and low markets, but principally to those ruinous effects of the Slave-system\*, of which we Abolitionists laboured to convince them above 20 years ago. But it may be hoped that misfortune, the grand corrector of erring mortals, will at last induce them to give a fair hearing to our statements and reasonings.

I am, &c.

W. D.

## LETTER VI.

### *Statements of the Prices of Labour, with Inferences.*

Planters who have weak gangs, pay dearly for auxiliary labour.—

Holing by the acre twice as dear in Jamaica as in Barbadoes,—

and in Grenada as in St. Kitts, and why.—Holing, in same island, twice as dear as day-labour, and why.—Produce some-

times pays not for holing.—Holer's or Jobber's profits far exceed Planter's.—Desperate shifts to procure labour.—Proprietors and

their Slaves hurt by Managers bringing Slaves of their own into a plantation.—Planters would be content with  $3\frac{1}{2}$  d. sterl. a day for

every Slave, old and young.—Yet Mr Steele pays them wages, and profits by it, and why.—Interest stimulates more than force.

—Industry can *only* be excited by reward.—The lowest price of day-labour exceeds the highest earnings of plantation Slaves.

\* See the authorities quoted p. 7 of New Reasons for abolishing the Slave-trade, printed in Jan. 1807, and generally ascribed to the masterly pen of Mr. Stephen



DEAR SIR,

THE bad tendency of buying Slaves instead of rearing them, is strongly exemplified in the exorbitant prices which *buyers* who can no longer get credit for Negroes, are obliged to pay for that necessary labour which their own reduced gangs are become too weak to perform.

By the answers to the eighth query in the Privy Council's Report, it appears that the prices paid to jobbers for holing land for canes, varies exceedingly in the different islands. In Jamaica, it is from 6*l.* to 7*l.* curr. the acre; in Barbadoes only half that price. For Barbadoes having been long fully cleared and settled, the demand for labour is not nearly so great there as in Jamaica, where the cultivation may still be considered as progressive. But in the former island, the competition is far greater, owing to the far greater proportion of people who have considerable gangs of Slaves (often reared by their own care) but cannot procure land sufficient to employ them. In Grenada, for similar reasons no doubt, the holing of land for canes, is 7*l.* 4*s.* (Barbad. curr.) which is double the price paid in St. Kitts; though by far the more productive island of the two.

Even in the same island, holing by the acre is often much dearer than labour by the day; being in general much more urgent, and not to be undertaken without a considerable gang, not to say more in demand by planters in bad credit; whereas one or two Negroes, as well as greater numbers, may be hired by the day or year, on a sugar plantation; sometimes by way of  
favour

favour to a poor widow, or other friend, who cannot get employment for them. Mr. Steele has already proved (at page 151 above) that, in Barbadoes, holing by the acre comes to double the price of day-labour. In Jamaica, about 36 Negroes can hole an acre for canes in a day\*. This, at the medium price in that island, is above 3*s.* 7*d.* curr. per day for each, or nearly the double of 1*s.* 10½*d.* the cotemporary price paid for day-labour †. The same, or nearly the same, difference exists in the other islands.

How the Jamaica planters can afford to pay 6*l.* 10*s.* curr. for holing, or say holing and planting ‡ an acre of land which yields, on the average, only 8 cwt. of sugar §, I know not. I only know that, in Barbadoes, a good deal of land used formerly to be barely holed, at about 3*l.* 5*s.* curr. the acre; the clear produce of which, in many years, was not worth that money ¶. The work however, must be done, or the whole business of a plantation would be deranged, and every probability of a crop precluded. Planters whose gangs

\* The average between Mr. Ashley in P. C. Report, p. 284, and Mr. Edwards, vol. 2. p. 216.

† The prices both of holing by the acre and of labour by the day, in Jamaica, have increased about 30 per cent. since 1789, the date of the P. C. Report; whence the above prices for the different islands, are taken. See Mathison, p. 88. But this affects not our argument, which turns on the *proportions* of those prices; and these are probably still nearly the same in all the islands.

‡ In P. C. Rep. p. 210, and Edwards, vol. 2. p. 216, holing and planting an acre of canes are said to cost 6 or 7*l.* curr. But Moreton, p. 44, says that this price is paid for holing only.

§ P. C. Rep. pp. 223, 226; Edwards, vol. 1. p. 430; Joint Commit. of Coun. and Assem. of Jamaica, in Edwards's Speech, Nov. 1789, p. 37.

¶ Address on Abolition Bill, p. 15.

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are so enfeebled as to call for much help from jobbers, are often in bad credit. Their promise of "rum in the crop," even when punctually kept, is but indifferent payment; the receiver being almost sure to lose by it. Hence holing by the acre is apt to be ill done, or ill timed, or both; the best payers being, of course, first and best served.

It is certain that jobbers, especially in Jamaica, employ their Slaves to far better purpose than their customers, the planters; a certain proof that the latter pay much more than they can afford for job-work. We have seen that the average returns of sugar planters fall short of  $4\frac{3}{8}$  per cent. But one of the Jamaica witnesses states, that he was offered 14 per cent. for his money, and to have had it insured, if he would have embarked it in a jobbing concern; adding that owners who work their Slaves themselves, in that way, make much more \*. Agreeably to this, Mr. Long demonstrates †, by a calculation "founded on fact," that were a distressed Jamaica planter to rent 20 able Field-negroes, on a make-good lease of seven years, at 8*l.* curr. a year each, he would lose, and the lessor would gain 15 per cent. per ann. on their value; supposing that value only 54*l.* curr. a-head, and that only six of them were to die during the lease. Such bargains occur in several of the other islands, both British and French ‡; and show what desperate risks planters will run, to obtain that labour which can only be secured by enabling the Slave to fear a natural suc-

\* Abridg. Evid. before H. of Commons, No. 4. p. 48.

† Hist. of Jamaica, vol. I. p. 401.

‡ P. C. Report, Answers to Qu. 8; D'Auberteuil, tom. 1. p. 245.

cessor, to fill his place when he dies, or becomes unfit for labour.

The managers of sugar plantations sometimes undertake auxiliary labour to a considerable extent. With their savings of salary, *et cætera*, they buy "Slaves, often women, whom they place in the kitchens of their employers; and, by their increase and occasional purchases, gradually acquire valuable gangs \*. These they not only let out by the day or year, but, as Mr. Steele complains, sometimes put them to the more profitable business of holing by the acre, on the very plantations which they superintend. This not only excites hurtful, and sometimes fatal jealousies between the two sets of Slaves, but brings the interests of proprietors (often *absent!*) and of their principal servants, into direct opposition. See pp. 11, 156 above. The one gives, and the other gets, the extravagant prices of labour above mentioned. "In this way, many have laid the foundation of fortunes;"—which others have lost †.

As to the *quantum* of "hired labour," we can only state that, on an average of the eight sugar plantations, the expences of which are detailed in the Report of the Committee on the Commercial State of the West India Colonies, July 1807, the hired labour, in the preceding year, cost very nearly 8 per cent. of the whole expences, and above 32½ per cent. of the expence of maintaining the Slaves. And, as the expence of hired labour appears to have been avoided by Mr. Steele, it ought to be added to his savings. The gangs of the

\* P. C. Rep. Arts. to Qu. 8. Jamaica; Suppl. to Do p. 36.

† Bolingbroke's Voy. to Demerary, &c. p. 209, compared with p. 215; Abridg. Evid. before H. of Commons, No. 4. p. 123.

above plantations, for aught that appears, wanted nothing but encouragement to stimulate them to the same exertions. For they averaged 277; whereas the average of the gangs on sugar plantations, in the whole island of Jamaica, is but 222\*.

So much for the prices of labour paid by the sugar planters. Let us now see what prices are paid to them for that indispensable article; or rather what *would* be paid to them, if their Slaves were to be let out, and to yield them the same income which they now derive from their whole property. On this head, Mr. Beckford says that "if a planter would wish to lease his estate, his income would be large, if he could only get 10*d.* sterl." or say 15*d.* curr. "a day for his Negroes (the loss made good) without requiring any thing for his land and works†"—that is (allowing as was usual in 1790, when Mr. B. wrote, the Slaves to be worth one-third of the whole property) his income would be large, if he could but get 5*d.* curr. or somewhat more than 3½*d.* sterl. for every Slave, old and young, considered as separate from the rest of the property, and only equipped, like a hired Negro, with his hoe and basket. By the "loss made good," Mr. Beckford means insurance, which we shall call only 5 per cent. The Lessee then would have to pay 5*d.* curr. in each of the 266 working days in the year‡, or 5*l.* 10*s.* 10*d.* besides insurance, 3*l.* 10*s.*, valuing the Slave, with Mr. Beckford, at 70*l.* curr.; that is, he

\* This average is taken from Enquiry into the Trade, &c. of Jamaica, p. 46.

† Descriptive Account of Jamaica, Pref. p. 31.

‡ See in the Appendix the Note marked page 71.

would have to pay 9*l.*0*s.*10*d.* curr. for the yearly labour of each Slave. This will be found to correspond very well with our last quotation from Mr. Long; and almost exactly with Mr. Steele's, or Mr. W's nearly contemporary estimate (p. 71 above) of 9*l.* curr. as the clear labour-annuity from each Slave.

To the statements of Mr. Beckford, Mr. Long, and Mr. Steele, we may add that of a gentleman equally well acquainted with plantation affairs, who says, "It is well known abroad, although it will hardly be credited here, that the hire of the Slaves, on many estates in our islands, if valued at an average of 3*d.* sterl. or not quite 4 $\frac{1}{4}$ *d.* curr. *per diem* each, will frequently amount to more *per annum*, than the neat yearly produce of the estate itself. *Experto crede Roberto.*" \*

Three other West Indian gentlemen well acquainted with the facts they state, "think themselves well warranted in asserting, that a planter can so little afford to give an European, or free Negro, one shilling sterl. per day (a sum it cannot be conceived either the one or

\* Page 38. of "Considerations to promote the settlement of our new West India Colonies," viz. the Ceded Islands of Dominica, St. Vincent, Grenada, and Tobago. This pamphlet was printed in 1764, and is ascribed to the late Sir W. Young, the first commissioner for the Crown, in selling the lands. He thinks it will hardly be credited here, by people unacquainted with plantation accounts, that the earnings of the W. Indian Slaves are so small.—But readers in general will be still more surprised to learn that the present price of the common labour of free men in Mexico, is only a dollar and a half per week! See M. Humboldt, in *Edinb. Review*, Nov. 1811, p. 168. The low price of labour in the East Indies is better known. About 22 years ago, it was from 9*d.* to 10*d.* sterl. per day, at Batavia. P.C. Rep. p. 472. In 1807, it was about 1*s.* sterl. at Pr. of Wales's island. Layman's Outline, p. 77.  
the

the other would work for) that if such a planter could employ his gang for wages at a much lower rate, he would never think of cultivating his ground, were it the most productive spot in the West Indies." . Yet 1s. sterl. per day on the whole property, would have been (when this evidence was delivered) only 4d. a day on the Slaves, old and young, taken separately; or a little more than  $5\frac{1}{2}d.$  currency. The same three gentlemen, however, make the clear actual yearly earnings of Field-negroes, on sugar plantations, only 6l. 10s. sterl. or 8l. 14s. currency \*, which is 6s. less than Mr. Steele, or Mr. W. stated.

Here a hasty reader will be ready to ask, How the planter who gets so little by the labour of his Slaves, when he pays them nothing, can ever afford to pay them wages, as Mr. Steele proposes? But Mr. Steele himself has already answered this question. "No argument like matter of fact is." He not only proposed to pay, but actually *did* pay them wages; and if the objector will but re-consider P. X's eighth, ninth, and tenth letters, beginning at page 116 above, he will see that Mr. Steele was a great gainer by it; and he would have gained much more by introducing the plough, of which he speaks so favourably, pages 166, 169 above. But a single individual, especially an aged one like him, and opposed as he was, could not do every thing.

The planters of the "old school" *cannot* pay their Slaves wages, because they *do not* pay them wages, — if one may express paradoxically, what is true in fact.

\* See Privy Council's Report, pp. 322, 341.

They do not take the right way to make human beings put forth their strength. They apply main force where they should apply moral motives; and punishments alone, where rewards should be judiciously intermixed. They first *beslave* their poor people with the cursed whip, and then stand and wonder at the tremor of their nerves, and the laxity of their muscles! And yet, strange to tell, those very men affirm, and affirm truly, that a Slave will do more work for himself in an afternoon, than he can be made to do for his owner in a whole day or more \*. Now what is the plain inference? Mr. Steele, though a stranger in the West Indies, saw it at once, and resolved to turn it to account. He saw that the Negroes, like all other human beings, were to be stimulated to permanent exertion, *only* by a sense of their own interests, in providing for their own wants, and those of their offspring. He therefore tried rewards, which immediately roused the most indolent to exertion. His experiments ended in regular wages, which the industry he had excited among his whole gang, enabled him to pay. Here was a natural, efficient, and profitable reciprocity of interests. His people became contented; his mind was freed from that perpetual vexation, and that load of anxiety which are inseparable from the vulgar system; and *in little more than four years, the annual neat clearance of his property was more than tripled!* See p. 157 above.

The case is so plain as to want no argument to support it. It only requires to be fairly stated. We immediately recollect, or reproach ourselves with forgetting, that a man, though enslaved, is still a moral agent,

\* P. C. Rep. pp. 368, 460; Long, vol. 2. p. 491; Gaisford, p. 177. and



and are tempted to ask, How it is possible that rational beings should expect other rational beings to labour constantly, without any rational motive, or visible interest? For "Industry, like every other exertion of human powers, whether of body or mind, requires its proper stimulations. *To toil incessantly in want, is too hard a condition for a human creature to endure.* Men will not be laborious but on the prospect of reaping some enjoyment. Nay it would be the most detestable tyranny to require it on other terms. The want of ~~due~~ encouragement must naturally make men sink into despondency, or plunge into desperation; evils which Governments ought to guard against with the utmost care \*."

But I have in some degree wandered from the object of this letter, which was to show the great difference between the price which the planter *pays* for labour by the day and by the acre, and how much both exceed the price he may be said to *receive*, in the clear earnings of his Slaves. A comparison of the foregoing statements will clearly prove that the sugar planters cannot afford the prices which too many of them are obliged to pay for day-labour, and far less the *doubly* extravagant charges of holing by the acre. The lowest price of the day-labour of Slaves which I can find, namely that in Barbadoes, for the reasons above given, is about 12½*d.* curr. or nearly 9*d.* sterl. feeding included,

\* *Considerations on the Policy, &c. of this Kingdom*, quoted in Mortimer's *Elem. of Commerce*, &c. p. 85. See also Burke's *Europ. Settl.* part 4. ch. 11.— Rewards to excite industry have, I think, no place in the new W. Indian Statutes, any more than in the old ones. They are all truly *Slave-laws*.

which

which costs about 3*d.* sterling \*. And even this, we see, is more than double the highest earnings of the field Negroes belonging to sugar plantations.

Dean Swift somewhat sarcastically observes, that he who could contrive to make two blades of grass grow where but one grew before, would do more for the good of his species than all the politicians who ever existed. And, without reviving old feuds, we may venture to say that he who could make one Slave do the work of two or three, would be a greater benefactor to West Indian proprietors, than all the apologists for Slavery who, by flattering their prejudices, have laboured to perpetuate their errors, or even than all the abolitionists who have endeavoured to rectify them. And such would be the planter who, disregarding the opposition of narrow-minded zealots (not to mention interested ones) should prevail on his brethren in general to adopt, *mutatis mutandis*, the modern improvements in husbandry, which are now clothing many parts of the comparatively barren soil of this kingdom, and particularly of North Britain, with luxuriant vegetation. To this great subject, as handled by planters of superior skill and experience, the present letter and the next may serve as a sort of introduction.

I am, &c.

W. D.

\* The above is the calculated average in Suppl. to P. C. Rep. p. 26. But in P. C. Rep. p. 290, day-labour, in Barbadoes, is said to cost from 10*d.* to 2*s.* curr. and upwards, in particular places and junctures. In Jamaica, A. D. 1774, the price per day was 13*d.* curr. including food, for able Negroes employed in the hard labour of cutting down wood. Long, vol. 2. p. 173.

## LETTER VII.

*The present Field Labour, on Sugar Estates, necessarily oppresses weak people.*

Attempt to estimate "the intensity of labour" in holing for canes.

—Slaves work, in same time, thrice as much for themselves, as for their owners,—dig twice as many cane-holes in ploughed land, as in unploughed,—generally "*over-worked and under-fed*," at the best —"*Overseers squeeze from them*" all possible labour.—In holing, the weak are, and *must* be, oppressed—also in dunging.—Slaves always work, *under the whip*.—Labour of porters, and of Slaves, in dunging, compared.—Comparative bodily strength of different nations.—Two strong men found equal to three weak.—Hence weak Slaves should not be urged to keep up with strong.—But the work of labouring *Cattle*,<sup>6</sup> ever has destroyed, and ever will destroy, *Men* in hot climates,—where the Creator has made little labour necessary.—Civilization depends on plough—and this on the use of iron —Hoe only "*scratches the ground*."—Field Slaves oppressed to earn their owners a groat a day!—But the making of sugar well understood.

DEAR SIR,

MR. MATHISON, an intelligent and candid planter, in his valuable Notices respecting Jamaica, page 38, suggests a calculation of the "intensity of labour" which the Slaves undergo, in holing for canes. We shall accordingly make an *attempt* of this kind, under the guidance of M. Coulomb, an able mathematician and experienced engineer, who, for many years, conducted extensive military works, both in France and the West Indies, and has published the results of his observations\*. But unluckily only one of his instances can

\* See, in Garnett's Annals of Philosophy, for 1800, an Abstract of the Results of experiments on the quantity of action of men, in daily labour, &c. by M. Coulomb, in the *Mem. de l'Institut. Nation.* for the year 1799.

be compared with holing, and that but imperfectly. He states that a labourer delved for him, in France, a piece of strong land, at the rate of about an English acre in 21 days, a task which he could not have performed in less than 42 days, in the W. Indies ; where M. Coulomb found that soldiers, in otherwise equal circumstances, could not do half the work which they did in France. But, in Jamaica, 36 Slaves can hole an acre for canes in a day \*. Therefore 42 soldiers could delve as much in a day, as 36 Slaves can hole. But, in delving, the whole surface is turned up ; in holing, only about two-thirds of it †. The proportion therefore, will now be 28 soldiers to 36 Slaves. The spade was driven down about a foot with a force of about 33 lb. English ; the hoe only about half that depth, with less than half the muscular force, having the advantage of falling from a considerable height. We have then at last, about 14 soldiers to 36 Slaves, or 7 to 18 ; that is, *seven* soldiers would hole as much as *eighteen* Slaves ; supposing sickness and desertion equal on both sides. We suppose also that the breaking of the clods in delving, is about equal to clearing out the holes in holing. The soldiers however were all men fit to bear arms ; the Slaves, men, women (including the pregnant and nursing) and growing people of both sexes. This will make a great difference. The

\* This is the average of Mr. Ashley's Statement in the P. C. Rep. p. 284, and of Mr. Edwards's, vol. 2. p. 216.

† Some allege that the same Slaves will hoe-plough, or turn up the whole surface with the hand-hoe, as soon as they can hole it. But in hoe-ploughing, the clods are not broken, as in delving ; and certainly the fatigue must be greater, even if the time should be less, in turning up the whole surface than a part of it.

state of the soil is another material circumstance. In this country, and probably in France, no man would think of delving land so indurated as that which is sometimes holed in the West Indies, during droughts, or when the work has been backward. The best cane land in Jamaica then "acquires the hardness of a brick," and if the digging of it "distresses" the robust, it must still more distress the weakly \*. On the grand article of diet, which, next to climate, M. Coulomb found most powerfully affected the quantity of labour, in all cases, we cannot hazard any comparison, being ignorant of the fare of French soldiers, though pretty well acquainted with that of the Slaves. From the whole, then, we can only infer that field Slaves do only between a third part and a half of the work dispatched by reluctant French soldiers; and probably not more than a third of what those very Slaves would do, if urged by their own interest, instead of brute force; as Mr. Steele experienced. See pp. 119, 129 above. "I can with great truth assert," says Mr. Edwards †, "that one English labourer would perform at least three times the work of any one Negro, in the same period." Mr. Long ‡ expresses the same idea in a hyperbole which points out the cause of this inactivity. "It is well known," says he, "that the produce of one day's labour" (of Negroes) "*for themselves* will turn out worth more than a fortnight's hire," paid to their owners.

\* Mathison's Notices respecting Jamaica, p. 37.

† Vol. 2 p. 131. See also P. C. Rep. pp 368, 460; Abridg. Evid before H. of Commons, No. 4. p. 33; Gaisford, p. 177.

‡ History of Jamaica, vol. 2. p. 491.

According to Mr. Edwards, an able field Negro, in Jamaica, can dig, in a day, 110 cane-holes\*, each about two feet and a half square, and six inches deep; and, in land lately ploughed, double the number;—no bad argument, by the way, in favour of the plough, as it enables one Slave to do as much as two, and that of the hardest work. In Barbadoes, where the holes are made larger and deeper, the average for every Negro may be about 85 holes in a day, each about 3 feet square, in the clear, and from 6 to 8 inches deep. Hence persons who have never visited the West Indies, may form an opinion of a Slave's day's-work, in holing for canes. I must own that it has always appeared to me a hard task; especially considering the climate, the scanty *diet* of the Slaves, and the *other* circumstances under which they perform their labour.

In the year 1788, a gentleman of learning and genius, writing in favour of the planters, frankly admitted it to be the general opinion of sensible men, “that the Negroes in Jamaica were over-worked and under-fed, even on the mildest and best regulated properties.†” Three-and-twenty years of discussion seem to have produced *no* alteration in these important particulars! Even the abolition of the Slave-trade has been

\* This is the number dug by each of the gang in a general way; as the able and weak work all together in a row See Edw. vol. 2. p. 215.

† Observations on the Treatment of the Negroes in Jamaica, p. 44. My present subject is the *over-working*; but I could not separate it from the *under-feeding*, without violence to this strong and pointed extract. The two next quotations preclude the objection, that it is out of date.—The respectable author's name is on the title-page; but I am not sure that its insertion here would be agreeable to him.

ineffectual. For in 1811, that sensible and candid planter, Mr. Mathison, "states *broadly* the *general* practice" of under-feeding "from one end of Jamaica to the other." He also believes "that excessive labour is one of the prevailing causes of depopulation, among the Slaves of that island, on sugar plantations." He adds that "there is a prevailing disposition on the part of overseers, to squeeze every possible degree of labour from the Negroes. No tenderness is felt for them, and no relaxation admitted." And he asks "Whether the ordinary work of ~~turning~~ ~~up~~ the land with the hoe, ~~does not require an~~ exertion, even under good regulation, and occasion a strain, especially in females, that is hurtful to the constitution \*?" But unhappily this admits not of a question, or a doubt. For the holes being equal in size, and dug in rows, in the same time, by people of unequal strength, the weak *must* be oppressed; especially as the time allowed is often the least possible. The putting out of dung is also *necessarily* oppressive to the weak; the basket-fulls being as nearly as can be guessed, of the same weight (from 60 to 80 lb) and to be carried on the head, at a running pace, for dispatch, the same distance, in the same time, by people of unequal strength and agility †. It is true, that parties of Slaves sometimes

\* Notices respecting Jamaica, pp. 31, 37, 39, 40.

† See a more particular description of holing and dunging, in my Letters on Slavery, p. 23. A respectable W. Indian correspondent (not Mr. Steele) who favoured me, as I requested he would, with some remarks on that book, observed that a strong Negro and a weak one were often put to dig the same hole. I wrote him, that I knew this, but did not think it worth while to mention it, as it was as difficult to select pairs, as individuals, of the same strength; especially

sometimes carry pots of sugar of the same weight, for several miles, without apparent injury. But then they walk at their natural pace, and are not forced, as in dunging, to run and stride over the inequalities of holed land; a distorting exertion which often causes ruptures\*. It is extremely disagreeable, but absolutely necessary, to add, that *the Slaves perform all their labour under the whip* †.

M. Coulomb found that the *greatest* useful daily labour of a porter is a quantity reducible to the carrying of 70 lb avoirdupois,  $13\frac{1}{2}$  English miles of level road in France, or  $6\frac{3}{4}$  miles in the West Indies. But an *ordinary* porter's day's work of 12 hours, is only 70 lb carried  $8\frac{1}{3}$  English miles in the former country, and  $4\frac{1}{10}$  miles in the latter †. Hence, and from their  
having

especially as, on most plantations, no Negro who can wield a hoe, is exempted from holing. At any rate, this remark applies not to dunging, which the Negroes dread still more than holing. The distribution of dung is more laborious in Barbadoes and the other windward islands, than in Jamaica; where the land, though sometimes "worked to the bone," gets but about one-third of the manure usual in the other islands. See Long, vol. 2. p. 441.

\* Supp. to P. C. Rep. pp 30, 31; Collins's Pract. Rules, p. 370.

† I never saw, heard, or read of the whip being dispensed with; except by Mr. Steele, a gentleman of Jamaica alluded to by Mr. Long, Mr. Wynne, and a Mr. Douglas, who, during the troubles in America, carried a valuable gang of Negroes from thence to that island, and wrought them by task. I believe that the whip is now discarded by a certain other respectable planter. Long, vol. 2. p. 441; Notes on the two Jamaica Reports, p. 10; Abridg. Evid before H. of Commons, No. 4. pp. 104, 116.

‡ Annals of Philos. for 1800, p. 95; S. Venant, p. 384. Coulomb's result is 1385 French lb carried 513 toises per day. St. Venant makes an ordinary porter's work 30 lb carried 1200 toises per hour; I suppose on the authority of Desaguliers, or  
D. Ber-



having to run over broken, holed land, I leave the reader to judge of the exertion of Slaves, in distributing dung. It is certainly such as no human creatures could endure for any great length of time \* ; but the fear of mistakes, prevents me from putting it into the shape of a calculation.

The following table will give a more accurate view than is common, of the inability of weak labourers to keep up with the strong. By a simple contrivance, the strength of the hands in grasping, and of the back in lifting, was tried on various individuals of five different nations, and the results were as follow :

		Hands	Back.
Savages of Van Diemen's land,	- -	50·6	(not tried)
Savages of New Holland,	- -	51·8	14 8
Inhabitants of Timor island,	- -	58·7	16·2
Frenchmen,	- -	69·2	22·1
Englishmen,	- -	71·4	23 8

The author attributes the weakness of the savages to their scanty and bad food, and their excessive fatigue in procuring it. But he says that the Timorese enjoy every advantage for unfolding their physical powers, compatible with a hot and moist climate, and a too indolent life †.

D. Bernoulli ; for I cannot get their books. In making the reductions, I allow 6 French feet to the toise, 1068 English feet to 1000 French, and 110 English lb to 100 French. See *Le Gendre Arithm.* p. 217.

\* Yet, in carrying out dung, even the women are obliged to work about eight hours a day. Abridg. Evid. before H. of Commons, No. 4. p. 103.—A worthy medical friend of mine was one day called, when riding past a certain plantation, to look at a Negro who had just dropped down dead, under the dung-basket.

† See, in the *Mag. Encycl.* Aug. 1804, an account of *Voy. de Découv. aux Terres Aust. &c. en 1801, 2, 3, et 4 par M. PERON, Natural. de l'Exped.* Paris, 1807.

Now,

Now, if labouring strength be as the strength of the hands and of the back jointly, which, other things being equal, must be nearly true, then I infer from the above table, that *five* Englishmen are able to do as much work as *twelve* New Hollanders, or *nine* Timorese; and that *nine* Englishmen possess as much collective strength as *ten* Frenchmen. But the savages are probably tougher and longer winded than the Europeans. I think it is Mr. Weld who says, that our soldiers can outrun the Indians of Canada, only for a short distance.

What degree on the above scale, the West Indian Negroes would occupy, it is impossible to say. But they are certainly a healthy and a hardy race; and, judging from the muscular forms of such of them as are well fed, and moderately wrought (as boat men, sailors, porters, &c.) there can be little doubt that, in similar circumstances, they would be found equal in strength, agility, and every other physical property, to any Europeans; and, in their own climate, far superior.

But be this as it may, who does not see, from the above table, that if New Holland rs, or even Timorese, should be forced to do the same quantity of labour, in the same time, with Frenchmen or Englishmen, the former *must* be oppressed? So it is, and must be, with weakly men, growing people of both sexes, and above all pregnant and nursing women, both in holing and putting out dung, at an equal rate with strong men. So it would be with a mixture of weak and strong English labourers; and so M. Coulomb found it to be, with his French soldiers. He was not so unreasonable as to expect the same quantity of work from weakly as from strong people; knowing that a load which would crush down many  
men

men to the earth, would be but a trifle to such men as Marshal Saxe, or Augustus King of Poland, or the strong men and women mentioned in Derham's Physico-Theology. "For ten years, he superintended soldiers employed in digging and removing earth, for which they were paid by the cubic toise, or fathom. He measured their work every fortnight; and almost always found that the grenadiers had got the start of the other companies in the ratio of 3 to 2, and sometimes in the ratio of 2 to 1. But the grenadiers were every one strong men; whereas a few weakly men in each of the other companies, *very much* diminished the total sum of their labour."

This last fact conspires with the proportions in the foregoing table, and with the experience of some sensible overseers of Slaves, in recommending a valuable improvement to those who *will* persist in the exclusive use of the hoe and basket. For if, instead of including in the great gang every individual who can barely wield a hoe, they were to work the weak and the strong separately\*, the labour would, in many cases, be increased to more than the expence of another driver; while the weakly would be greatly relieved. As an admiral waits for his ill sailing ships, so ought a driver to wait for his weakly Slaves; or rather (as such waiting is scarcely practicable) put them at once to work by themselves. The strong certainly do wait for them, as much as ever they can or dare. Aye and they *will* wait, more or less, for their parents and wifes and

\* A few of the weak are often put to work, in a separate corner, where they can be seen by the driver. But this is seldom done till their strength has been tried, in the way mentioned in Letters on Slavery, p. 23; and which I shall not repeat. \*

children,

children, in spite of all the driver's <sup>14</sup>*arguments ! !* It is often said, that "it is one thing to throw the hoe, and another thing to make it *tell*." The Negroes are particularly respectful to elderly people; and should the gang contain but one such venerate character, every individual will do his best to wait for *mama* or *dady*; as they often call their seniors, whether so related, or not. Thus, for reasons little known to unconnected French soldiers, "*a few weakly people, in a gang of Slaves, will very much diminish the sum total of their labour.*"

M. Coulomb "thinks that men, in producing a given effect, adopt that degree of velocity which they find most favourable to their efforts; for that, with equal fatigue, they can produce the same daily action, though they greatly vary their degrees of quickness, and take many small intervals of rest. Men, for example, carrying very heavy loads, prefer a quick pace for a short time, succeeded by a small interval of rest, to a continued slower motion; and this preference seems to be dictated by the admirable laws of the animal œconomy. It is probable too, that the best division of those intervals of exertion and rest, is not the same for all men, but varies according to their different physical constitutions. But be this as it may, it is clear, continues M. Coulomb, that when men consume their action in violent exertion, more than *seven* or *eight* hours labour in the day, including their little intervals of rest, ought not to be expected from them."

These hints may be of use; especially to those who are resolved to adhere to the present way of holing and dunging. But, for my own part, I have always considered ~~that~~ way as incorrigibly bad.<sup>11</sup> No possible modification,

modification, I am satisfied, will ever render forced labour, with the hoe and basket, supportable in a climate where, as Mr. Steele tells us, "every exertion of body and mind is fatigue;" and *severe* exertion is *inseparable* from that mode of cultivation. The discomfort and *destruction* \* of the labourers, have ever been, and, from the nature of the case, ever will be the consequences of compelling human beings to do the work of labouring cattle in such a climate. This is not an opinion of yesterday. I was convinced of its truth forty years ago, by personal observation, on estates said to be well regulated, and also on those of a contrary description; and farther acquaintance with the subject only strengthened my conviction. Human infirmities, especially those of the female sex, plead strongly against such drudgery, under a tropical sun. Nay the Creator himself has put a broad negative on this whole system. His *intention* is plainly declared, by the adaptation of animals and plants to the different climates which they inhabit. In no part of his works, is his beneficent œconomy more admirable, than in providing the inhabitants of hot regions with food and clothing, and shelter, at a comparatively trifling expence of labour. Had the same severe and incessant toil been necessary for subsistence in hot, as in cool and temperate climates; the torrid zone could never

\* "*Travail pénible et destructeur.*" S. Venant, p. 345.—  
 "The decrease of Negro-slaves has partly arisen from their *destructive* occupations." Collins's Practical Rules, p. 131. Destructive, from excessive or continual exertion; for there is nothing in the nature of their occupations, which can be even suspected of insalubrity; except long confinement to the boiling-house, or still-house; which, at the worst, can affect but a few.

have been inhabited. This has been but too decisively proved by the fatal effects of continued hard labour on the native tribes, as well as on the more robust Negro race, in the West Indies.

I do not say that the Negroes should not labour. They ought undoubtedly to labour with regularity and diligence,—at work fit for human beings to do, in a burning climate. I only maintain the utter inability of the Negroes, or any other people, to perform those heavy labours of agriculture which are made the work of cattle, in every civilized country under heaven, except the West Indies, and the Slave-states of America.

What was it, indeed, that at first introduced, and now support civilization, but this very substitution of cattle for manual labour in cultivating the soil? And were mankind deprived of the use of the plough †, would they not speedily return to their original barbarism? Instead of one man being able to raise food for several others, as he now does with the help of cattle, he would have enough ado to scrape up, with the spade or the hoe, a miserable subsistence for himself; and arts and sciences, manufactures and commerce would vanish from the face of the earth.

The hoe, or the spade were necessarily used when the islands were first cleared of wood; as the plough could not go among the roots of the trees. Before the forests were removed, Slavery was unhappily introduced; and, as usual, effectually prevented all farther

\* See Tryon's Friendly Advice to Gentlemen Planters, pp. 90, 93; Burke's Europ. Settl. part 6, ch. 11.

† The plough may be said to imply the use of iron; which Dr. Robertson and others observe, is the *sine qua non* of civilization. improvement.

improvement \*. The Negroes have, ever since been forced to “scratch the ground” † with the hoe, as they did in Africa; so that the agriculture of the islands remains in the same rude and comparatively unimproved state, in which Ligon found it, amidst the newly felled trees of a part of Barbadoes, in the middle of the seventeenth century. Not long before that period, “the French rustics broke out into a rebellion, on being obliged to substitute iron instruments of agriculture for those of wood, which their ancestors had been accustomed to employ ‡.” At that time, the Scotch highlanders used to load their women with dung-cree, or panniers §, and many of the Irish to yoke their cattle by the tails ¶. But, in no part of the world perhaps, has agriculture been more improved than it has since been, in many counties of Ireland and Scotland;—while, in the West Indies, the Slave-system seems to have totally arrested the progress of rural improvement, and to have withheld from agriculture all benefit from the vast advancement of the kindred arts

\* See the Wealth of Nations, vol 2. p 87; and vol 3. p. 37.

† “La culture actuelle—ne fait que gratter la terre.” S. Venant, p 280

‡ Knwan’s Logick, vol. 1. p. 199; from La Mothe de Vayer.

§ In Fife, however, and no doubt in many other parts of Scotland, dung-carts were then in use, as appears from the *Polemo-Midduna* (the Dunghil Battle) a macaronic poem, by Drummond of Hawthornden, who died in 1649.

“In cartis yokato omnes, extrahito muckam. &c.

Extemplo cartas bene fillavere gigantes.” &c.

I have seen dung carried to steep land, in *creels*, on the backs of horses.

¶ In 1634, an act was passed in Ireland, against the cruel usage of yoking horses by the tail. See the authorities quoted in Edin. Review, April 1807, p. 44.

and

and sciences. In the East Indies, as we shall see, in the Appendix, the sugar-cane is cultivated, in the large way, by free labourers, assisted by cattle. In the West, they are still toiling and trifling, like gardeners at a hot-bed, with the hoe and the basket! and the Slaves are most miserably oppressed to earn for their Owners a groat a-day!

It has been otherwise with the making of sugar. In this, it was necessary to please the English merchant. Competition has of course improved the quality, which depends so much on the process, that I could name an estate which, in my time, turned out nothing but what was called *mundungus*, while an adjoining plantation, in exactly the same physical circumstances, made the best of sugar\*. Indeed so much pains and expence have been laudably bestowed on the preparation of that great article, that when a certain able chemist went out to introduce improvements, I could not help observing that there was little to be expected from his ability, in a case where practical skill and varied experiment, stimulated by immediate interest, had probably compensated the want of theory. Accordingly, I am told that he found not so much room for improvement as he expected; the construction of the chimneys and flues excepted, and the economy of fuel.

Your's, &c.

W. D.

\* See also Edwards, vol. 2, p. 265.



## LETTER VIII.

*Great Utility of the Plough in raising the Sugar-cane.*

The late Sir J. Johnstone deliberates about introducing plough into his plantation in Grenada.—His Slaves already well treated — Attempts to prejudice him against plough — But, convinced by evidence,—he sends out plough and ploughman — Managers often adverse to plough, and why;—but Sir J.'s manager zealous for it — Particulars of this experiment,—which completely succeeds.—Other planters in Grenada adopting plough,—when the island was laid waste by *brigands*.—Great additions to Sir J.'s crops by plough.—Other instances of its utility — Advantage of watering cane-land — Impediments to improvement in W. Indies — Most objections to the plough frivolous — Present mode of cultivation encourages, instead of destroying, vermin.

DEAR SIR,

WE have seen that the prevailing method of cultivation, in the W. Indies, by hand-labour alone, is in *its own nature*, and therefore *incurably*, inefficient and oppressive! Let us now, if you please, consider, How the Slaves may be relieved, and the planters benefited by the labour of cattle.

In the Letters on Slavery, I inserted most of the information I then possessed, on this part of my subject. While I was preparing that piece, in the year 1788, the late Sir James Johnstone, M. P. did me the honour to consult me on the means of improving the condition of the Slaves on his plantation of Westerhall, in Grenada; though they were already better treated than nine-tenths of the Negroes in the W. Indies. This proposition was ably seconded by his secretary, Dr. Otto, who deservedly possessed his entire confidence.

dence. Neither of my friends had ever been in the W. Indies ; but they were no strangers to the warmth with which many planters, otherwise respectable, opposed all *innovation*, as they chose to call it, in a system which, they confessed, could only be defended on the ground of necessity. Sir James knew that this had been “ the tyrant’s plea,” in all ages ; but, in the present case, his own experience went far towards convincing him that the good treatment of the Slaves already on the plantations, took away all necessity of importing more, and even secured their natural increase, for the extension of cultivation, if it should be thought expedient. ~~But~~ that increase was not likely to be promoted by the practice of “ *driving*,” as it is very properly called, men and women through *all* the horse-labour of agriculture, in an enervating climate, and in the *manner* which I (perhaps the first of any) particularly described \*. This appeared to Sir James altogether deplorable, and not to be endured, without stronger reasons than any which he had heard alleged in its defence. In short, he wanted to know how the Negroes could be made comfortable, without being immediately freed ; which he saw would not be good either for them or their owners.

In all such cases, it appears right to “ begin at the beginning ;” not to attempt too much at once ; to secure the ground we have gained, and to take care not to do harm while we intend to do good. Sir James’s people were already well supplied with food

\* In Letters on Slavery, p. 23.

and clothing \*. Beside the ordinary articles, *good* beef and pork were regularly dealt out to them twice a week, and not “occasionally” as Mr. Long says †; that is, a small quantity at Christmas, Easter, and Whitsunday, *only*, as is customary on too many plantations. A foundation even appeared to be laid for moral and religious instruction; for the poor people, like many of the French Negroes, used to assemble every evening, of their own accord, and sing their *cantiques*, or hymns, before they went to rest.

My suggestions, therefore, were chiefly confined to the introduction of the plough, and the labour of cattle in carts, &c. wherever practicable. These were indeed the points on which my respectable friend chiefly wished to be informed. In addition to my own observations, and the specific instances of the introduction of the plough mentioned in p. 25 and 116 of Letters on Slavery, I laid before him extracts from the works there quoted, and particularly from the first volume of Mr. Long’s History of Jamaica, as containing the best account then known to me, of the culture of the sugar-cane by the plough. Sir James appeared to be, in a considerable degree, satisfied with the information thus presented to him. But his conviction could not, I think, be fairly said to have been completed, till a considerable time afterward—by the ap-

\* I found that Sir James had even sent them out shoes. The Negroes thanked good massa; but declined wearing them. They are indeed unnecessary for Field-negroes, except perhaps, in some peculiar cases of disease.

† History of Jamaica, vol. 2. p. 490.

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pearance of the Report of His Majesty's Privy Council, and particularly by one of its most valuable articles, the evidence of Mr. Ashley of Cookham, formerly of Jamaica, who retrieved his affairs, and so greatly extended his cultivation as nearly to double his crop, by means of the plough *alone*.—If there should be room, I shall give, in the Appendix, the substance of that document and the information which I have since met with, in other respectable publications, and which could not be inserted here, without immoderately swelling this letter.

Having maturely considered the information and evidence just mentioned, and satisfied his judgment as to the practicability of the proposed improvement, Sir James made no secret of his favourable opinion of the plough. Certain West Indian gentlemen, not uninfluenced, perhaps, by the *esprit du corps*, nor unmoved by the freedom with which Sir James censured the vulgar Slave-system, in Parliament, now attacked the poor plough and its *enthusiastic* supporters, with all the wit and argument they could muster. I thought myself bound to answer, as well as I could, every thing the gentlemen advanced against the plough and the abolition, in the shape of argument or fact; and I knew that their other weapon was less dangerous, in the quarter aimed at, than they had supposed. Sir James was indeed fond of wit (perhaps too much so) but any one attempting to palm on him wit for argument, or particular exceptions for general rules, would have been disappointed. In the present case, he heard both sides with patience and impartiality; and it is impossible to believe that any thing but the weight of evidence

evidence properly compared, and, in some cases, explained, could produce in his mind even a leaning to the plough, in opposition to the influence and ability which opposed it. The facts alone, which could not be denied, seemed to weigh with Sir James. And he could not but observe the *manner* in which Mr. Ashley (as if afraid to offend his own “servant” as Mr. Steele would have called him) gives his “*opinion* that Overseers have a prejudice against the plough, from a dislike to be driven out of their ancient mode of cultivation;” and that “some few\* of the Overseers purchase Negroes to let out to hire, and where that is the case, it *may be* their interest not to abridge the labour of Slaves.” This grand impediment to the use of the plough, I believe, struck Sir James with a force which was rather augmented than abated, by the caution of

\* They are not so few as is here modestly stated. See Mathison, p. 24. But even a few such persons might be supposed to have considerable influence among men of their own profession. For an Overseer who, beside old and young, can turn out perhaps 25 or 30 Negroes, to hold by the acre, must have been a successful man; and younger Overseers, of course will imitate his conduct, and adopt his maxims.—The Attornies (acting for absentees, by powers of attorney) possess yet greater influence; for they generally appoint the Overseers. Their legal commission, (in Jamaica) of 6 per cent. on the gross produce, would no doubt give them a direct interest in increasing that produce, by the plough. But I have already hinted at causes which tend to turn the balance of the attorney’s interest the contrary way. I say *hinted*, being unwilling to be more explicit on so invidious a subject, than is absolutely necessary to show, that the *proprietor* is the only party who can be said to be really and essentially interested in the use of the plough. Incumbered proprietors are little more than the agents of their creditors; and opulent proprietors are generally *absent*.—Is it necessary to say more?

the

the respectable witness. The result was in unison with the poet's fine address,

"Ye generous Britons, venerate the Plough," &c.

Sir James declared his resolution to give it a fair trial; saying that if it succeeded, it would be a pleasing subject for reflection, and if it did not, he should not be ruined by its failure.

The activity and intelligence of Dr. Otto, gave effect to Sir James's resolution; and in October 1789, a skilful labouring husbandman, of the name of Mitchell, was dispatched from Sir James's estate in Scotland, with the common plough of that country. Mitchell was preceded or accompanied by a copy of the above-mentioned information and evidence; and by a letter to Mr. Keith, the Manager, strongly expressive of Sir James's determination to give it a full and a fair trial, cost what it might. It was also hinted, with all the delicacy observed by Mr. Ashley, on the same point, that Sir James was not unapprized of the dislike of "some few" Managers to the plough, or of its cause. But this hint proved to be unnecessary; for Mr. Keith, who was a man of education and intelligence, appeared throughout to do the utmost justice to the experiment, and even to have been zealous for its success.

This decisive step brought Dr. Otto and myself, its principal, or only advisers, into a state of responsibility from which even Sir James's liberal way of thinking and talking could not soon relieve us; the cane being from 14 to 18 months on the ground, besides the time of preparation and cropping, and the voyages out and home. This responsibility, as to the expence, fell heaviest on Dr. Otto, and, as it respected the Abolition

tion cause, on me. As far as I know, no other person possessing any local knowledge of West Indian affairs, was consulted; and I must own that, in no part of my abolition labours, was my anxiety greater, or of nearly so long continuance. A failure would probably have condemned the plough to a long oblivion, and might even have been held up as a *proof* (and it would have been as good a one as most which were given) that the Abolition itself, from which the experiment emanated, was a wild and a pernicious project.

I shall now give you the particulars of this great experiment, from notes taken at the time, chiefly from Mr. Keith's letters to Sir James Johnstone and Dr. Otto.

Six American horses having been previously provided, Mitchell who, as before observed, sailed in October, began to plough in December 1789. After some sickness at first, he stood the labour extremely well; as did also the horses, oxen and mules; for they were all occasionally used. The horses, the most delicate of the three, throve as well as any horses in England.—The plough was sometimes drawn by two pairs of horses, each pair yoked abreast; and sometimes by a pair of horses before a pair of oxen, or mules. But Mr. Keith thought that one pair of horses would answer for land which had been once fairly broken up.—The horses were fed with Guinea grass, oats and beans; but the oxen and mules had grain only occasionally.—After the land had been ploughed, it lay exposed, for some time, to the weather, and was next cross-ploughed and harrowed. The cane-holes were then formed by the Negroes, who were unspeakably eased by the land having been thus properly pulverized;  
and

and it was much sooner ready for planting.—No complaint was made of the soil being washed away by the rains ; so that it must have been pretty level ; and there is much land of this description, even in the mountainous island of Grenada.—Westerhall estate contains in all 1002 acres, of which 400 were then in sugar cultivation ; and of these between 150 and 200 had been ploughed ; though some of it was so stony as often to break the plough \*. But what proportion of the estate is arable, was not stated.—No canes were planted in the furrow, after the plough ; but Mr. Keith was of opinion that this method would answer.—The canes on the ploughed land, were the finest and best yielding ever seen on that estate, or indeed in Grenada ; having been superior to some brought from Demerary as curiosities ; and they ratoon<sup>d</sup> far better than those planted in the common way.—The Negroes became expert ploughmen in about six months ; and Mitchell soon after left Westerhall, and was making money, by instructing the Slaves of other proprietors, who plainly saw the advantages of the plough.—The additional rum more than paid all the expence attending this *first* experiment ; and the horse-dung was found, as usual, to be extremely valuable.—In a word, the whole plan so completely succeeded, that Mr. Keith expressed his astonishment that the plough had not been long ago generally introduced into the West Indian cultivation ;

\* This plough was strongly bound with iron. But why might it not have been wholly composed of that metal ? In April 1811, I saw an iron plough of this description in Scotland ; and was told that it answered very well. It would probably answer also in the W. Indies, where wood-work from this country, does not well stand exposure to the sun and the rains.

and



and his firm belief that Mr. Long was right in asserting that one plough, with two sets of four horses each, to relieve each other, would turn up more land than 100 Negroes; and Mr. Chisholm, who succeeded Mr. Keith, as manager, entertained the same opinion.

Such were the progress and prospects relative to this great improvement in 1794, when the French revolutionary *brigands* desolated the island of Grenada; and the flourishing estate of Westerhall suffered in buildings, produce, &c. to a large amount. Sir James Johnstone died the same year, and the estate passed into the hands of his brother, the late Sir William Pulteney (formerly Johnstone) with whom I had not the honour to be acquainted.

Very few, however, of Sir James's Negroes joined the *brigands* (not one voluntarily) in consequence, no doubt, of the good treatment they experienced. Another good consequence of this, was the preservation of their health and lives; one proof of which was that Sir James lost but 3 of his people, out of 340, by an epidemic flux which prevailed in 1793, and carried off 30 out of 400, on a neighbouring estate, situated in all respects like Westerhall.

			Hhds.	Hhds.
" 1790.—	Crop before any sugars, raised by the			
	plough, were sent home—a good crop	260		
" 1791.—	First crop after the introduction of	295,	increase	35
	the plough, including what was raised by			
	its means			
" 1792.	Ditto	Ditto	327	— 32
" 1793.	Ditto	Ditto	396	— 69"
1794.	Ditto	Ditto	302	

The crop of 1794 is not expressly stated in my notes. It is inferred from a memorandum in these words:

"On

“ On an average of four years, ending in 1794, seventy more hhds. (each 16 cwt. on average) came home.” This would make the crop of 1794, the last year in the series, 302 hhds. indicating a loss of crop alone, by the devastation of the *brigands*, of 94 hhds. supposing that it would not have exceeded the crop of 1793, had no devastation taken place.

“ In my first Abolition tour in Scotland, I picked up the following information respecting the plough; which, of course, I communicated to Sir James Johnstone.

“ Sir,

Huntly, 17 Feb. 1792.

“ I have had occasion to be well acquainted with William Jesuman, who went from this country about the year 1767. A few days before his taking ship at Greenock, he was asked by a gentleman there, if he was going to Jamaica? Jesuman answered that he was; and had been bred to the plough, and understood the working and feeding of cattle. The gentleman having had an order from his correspondent in Jamaica, to look out for a man of this description, accordingly hired him for a year, at a certain sum as wages, and agreed to pay his passage. Jesuman carried out some ploughs with him. On arriving in Jamaica, the planter carried him to a field where there was a plough going, with a Negro who had a rope about the horns or neck, of each ox. Jesuman desired the planter to put away the Negro, and to let him have a goad, or long sharp stick, with which he would drive the cattle. In a few hours he made the cattle understand the goad; and in a little time made the Negroes use it. Jesuman continued for some years, in the capacity of a ploughman. He then engaged with some principal planters to manage a distillery.

stillery. He returned to Aberdeen about five years ago, and now resides in the neighbourhood of Huntly. He made about 3000*l.* in Jamaica, which he lent to planters, &c. &c. If time would permit, Jesuman, who is now an old man, would give you his own history.

“ I am, &c.

“ To Mr. Dickson.

WILLIAM FORSYTH\*.”

“ Elgyn, 18 Feb. 1792.

“ Mr. Grant, one of the ministers of Elgyn, presents his compliments to Mr. Dickson ; and has to mention to him, that the late Colonel Grant of Arndilly, a considerable planter, of many years experience in Jamaica, informed Mr. G. that he had adopted, with success, the use of mules and horses in a plough, for tilling and hoeing his cane grounds ; and that with a profit greatly superior, in every point of view, to what he could have gained by executing the same work with Slaves,” &c.

I should have mentioned that I advised my friend Sir James to send out a fire-engine, which I take to be an indispensably necessary apparatus on all considerable sugar plantations ; exposed as they continually are to the ravages of fire. In the present case, it promised to be additionally useful in watering the cane-fields, from a brook which ran through them. A great length of leathern pipe was, therefore, sent out along with the engine. It was found very useful in keeping the dung-heaps moist ; but it does not appear to have been much used in watering the cane-pieces. Perhaps they might

\* Mr. Forsyth was in the commission of the peace, and called out of respect, Provost of Huntly ; which, though rather a considerable manufacturing town, is not a royal borough.

not have been so dry as to require it.—In general, however, irrigation, so advantageously practised by the French, particularly in St. Domingo, is not much attended to in our islands; even in situations where it would be easily practicable. In one case indeed, there was a law-suit, many years ago, between two proprietors in St. Philip's, Barbadoes, about a spring which rose in the road separating their plantations; and it was at last decided that they should have the benefit of it alternately. Mr. Long\* mentions another instance in Jamaica, where a plantation, in a district naturally so dry that it would not bear canes, was brought, by the skilful diversion of a neighbouring stream, to such a state of fertility, that it was said to have yielded between three and four hogsheads of sugar per acre!

The progress of agricultural improvement, however, is not very rapid any where, and there are causes which greatly impede it in the West Indies. Many of the opulent proprietors are constant absentees†. A number of them, like Sir James Johnstone, never so much as saw their plantations; and few are so anxious as he was, to have them properly regulated. Being ignorant of the details of cultivation, they cannot judge of the propriety of any proposed improvement; and, like Sir James, are perhaps beset by men bigoted to bad practices, merely because they are old; and have not, or do not exert the same ability to weigh the facts

\* History of Jamaica, vol. 2. p. 156,

† In other countries as well as Ireland, it “makes a great *différence*, when there's no eye or hand over the agent.” So says a worthy Irish matron, in Miss Edgeworth's *Tales of Fashionable Life*.

and arguments, for and against those practices. The grand object of their substitutes, is present produce, on which the bread and character of the Overseers, and (in Jamaica) the per centage of the Attornies, and by depend—to say nothing of certain *other* concerns of both, which are not over favourable to the interest of their absent employers. The climate is unfriendly to exertion both of body and mind; and the Slave-system adverse, both in principle and practice, to improvement of *every* kind \*. It stunts and stupifies the faculties of the Slave, and has no tendency to improve those of his superiors; while it gives unlimited scope to the vile passions of illiterate, unfeeling, white underlings; in proving whose crimes, it is never to be forgotten, that the evidence of Negroes is a legal nullity.—No man acquainted with the moral and oeconomic state of things thus *touched on*, will expect improvements to be forthwith adopted merely because they happen to be beneficial *only* to the *Proprietors* and their *Slaves*. But as there are no doubt proprietors, both absent and resident, who are determined to make the most of their

\* On the direct tendency of Slavery to prevent the abridgement of human labour, see Smith, and Montesquieu, in *Wealth of Nations*, vol. 2. p. 87, and vol. 3. p. 37; and Dr. Anderson's *Observations on Slavery*, p. 10. Hardly a plough, harrow, roller, or horse-hoe is used in the W. Indies. Planted grass and green Guinea corn, are slowly and clumsily cut with a common *knife*, instead of a scythe or a sickle. When a cart happens to be used in conveying town or stable-dung to some distant plantation or field, the Negroes first fill their baskets with their hoes, and then empty them into the cart; there being no such thing as a dung-fork. In short, the *only* implements in general use, are the hoe and the basket, and, in crop time, the bill-hook.—Need we wonder then, that the Slaves are starved and oppressed, and the Planters poor and pinched?

plantations

plantations (which is but another phrase for saving the labour, not to say the lives of the Slaves by the help of cattle) I think it my duty to throw all the light I can on the use of European implements in raising the sugar cane.

I thought to have closed this long epistle with these hints on the *real* obstacles to the general adoption of the plough; and which I should be sorry to have occasion to enlarge. As to the *ostensible* obstacles, it is remarkable that they are but slightly mentioned by one or two of the many planters whose writings and testimonies I have consulted on this subject, and that they are not generally applied by any one of them. Even the strongest of these obstacles, the difficulty of supporting the cattle under the labour of the plough, Col. Martin (of the singularly drougthy island of Antigua) thinks can only affect the ploughing of the "stiff soils." But he adds, "all our light soils are ploughable at *any* season \*." At the worst, the maintenance of the cattle cannot be more difficult than that of the Slaves, in doing the same work. The truth is, that neither of them are properly maintained, or can be, under the vulgar system; in which, the Slaves, over and above *all* the heavy labour, have the cattle to provide with their miserable pittances of *picked* grass and weeds †. The minor obstacles of steep and stony land, apply partially to almost every country, as well as to the West Indies; and I should have said as little about them as some others, had I not often heard them urged in conversation by planters, and publicly noticed them, with the answers made to them by myself and a few other friends to the plough †.

\* See Col. Martin's Essay on Plantership, p. 38.

† See Letters on Slavery, p. 24.

By way of making amends for having put into print such trifling allegations against the plough, I shall here charge the common practice of holing with an objection which I have often urged verbally, but did not like to publish, without some higher authority. I now find, however, M. St. Venant asserting (p. 283) that pulverizing the soil with the plough and harrow, destroys the indigo *chenille*, or caterpillar. And why not other vermin? I would ask. Barbadoes for many years preceding the great hurricane of 1780\* was almost desolated by ants and other insects; one of which (since called the borer) seemed to have been then first brought into existence; having never been seen or heard of before, by the oldest inhabitants. In holing for canes, a part only, perhaps about two-thirds, of the soil being turned up, the ants certainly, and

\* That awful visitation greatly checked the ravages of the vermin, in some way which it would not be easy to explain. Certain it is, that the rains became more plentiful and regular; and the common opinion, that hurricanes are followed by good crops, proved true. See Long, vol. 1. p. 529; also p. 161, above.—Mr. Edwards, vol. 2., page 220, ridicules Sir H. Sloane for believing that the ants drove the Spaniards from that part of Jamaica where they first settled. If Mr. E. thought this incredible, it would hardly be safe for me to describe the ravages of the ants which I have seen, both on plants, especially sugar-canes, and on young and weakly animals—ravages deplored in addresses to the Government, from several of the islands, and in the form of prayer used in Barbadoes, on the anniversary of the great hurricane.—As for Jamaica, a certain military gentleman told me, that on visiting his poor fellows, in a hospital in that island, he found one of his best men so weak that he could not keep off the ants which had attacked his eyes, mouth, and nostrils;—while the black nurses were working on a neighbouring plantation for the benefit of the surgeon! With some difficulty, the praise-worthy officer got him cashiered.

probably

probably the blast-insect, borer, &c. get leave to propagate without interruption, in the unbroken part (the banks and distances) and being pampered with cane-juice, are the best fed, and most active animals on the plantation. Surely, you will say, no man would be so foolish as to plant his cabbages among ant-nests. I am not talking of the folly, but the fact : the fact is so, and so I have seen hundreds of acres planted with canes ;—for the benefit of the ants, &c. though you might as well try to move the Monument, as to make a thorough-bred manager believe it. Now my opinion was, and is, that the plough and the harrow would destroy the nests of the ants *at least*, and effectually prevent their propagation ; so that were those implements universally used, all the cultivated surface of every island would be rendered uninhabitable by those destroyers. This opinion is countenanced, not only by M. St. Venant, the first planter, as far as I know, who has publicly asserted the fact, but by every naturalist \* whom I have consulted on the subject. From their accounts, it would appear that the systematic and curious, but destructive operations of the ants could not be carried on, in a soil frequently agitated by the plough and the harrow.

Your's, &c. W. D.

\* See Derham's Phys. Theol. b. 8, c. 5, ed. 1798. Bonnet, *Contempl. de la Nature*, part 2, c. 22 ; Abbé Sauri, *Geogr. Phys.* tom. 1. p. 79 ; Huber sur les Fourmis, in *Edin Review*, July 1812. —On the wonders performed by the *Termites*, or Wood-ants, or Bug-a-bugs, see the quotations in the same Review ; also Mr. Smeathman's curious memoir in the *Philos. Transact.* vol. 71.

P. S. Since



P. S. Since writing the above, I have received from the benevolent and respectable Planter to whom you introduced me some months ago, a letter dated Portsmouth 28th February 1813, of which the following is an extract.

After mentioning that a severe indisposition had precluded him, for above six weeks, from all exercise of body or mind, he adds, "I am now in a convalescent state—and expect to sail as soon as the wind permits. I have now in London ~~six~~ seasoned and well trained Suffolk horses, which, with a ploughman of high character, and every requisite to afford the plough a fair trial, are going out, with the next convoy, to my estates; and, God willing, I doubt not that I shall have very favourable reports to make from their effects."

\* \* I have many more documents to offer on the use of the plough in *both* the Indies; but their bulk obliges me to reserve them for the smaller type of the Appendix. Compression will be absolutely necessary, in order to make room for them all.

## LETTER IX.

*Can a Sufficiency of Corn be raised in the W. Indies?*

Planters formerly raised all the corn they used.—Corn imported into Sugar islands, trifling in quantity, and may be well spared.—Planters too negligent in raising provisions.—Barbadoes visited by *famine*, in 1777;—supplied by Government;—afterwards supplies itself,—and St. Lucie garrison, &c.—*Famines* in Jamaica, from hurricanes, &c.—Provisions from town-agents often bad and dear;—a miserable mode of supply.—Canes, &c.

engross

engross most labour ;—yet give not nearly such certain crops as provisions.—Lands in the islands, not permanently worn out.—New Englanders early use *plough* for planting Indian corn, of which they make good bread, &c.—But *Slavery* continues *hand-hoe* in W. Indies.—The same sugar might be made from much less land.—Decrease of Slaves in Jamaica, in 1810, no less than 10,231,—from want and excessive labour,—which plough would alleviate or remove. N. England and Scotch farmers, &c. economize human labour, and why not also W. Indians ?—Some planters introducing costly steam-engine, why not cheap and humble plough ?

DEAR SIR,

I PROPOSE, in this letter, to throw together some facts respecting ground, or island provisions, and the use of the plough in raising them. I conceive if it can be shown that Barbadoes, by far our most densely peopled sugar island, can, in ordinary times, supply itself with vegetables, corn and live stock, even with the *hoe*, no doubt will remain that every one of the islands may do the same, with the *plough*. I must say, indeed, that I never heard an objection made, nor is it easy to conceive what objection can be made, to the raising of most kinds of provisions with that implement ; and I have elsewhere \* given instances of its success, when so applied.

I cannot find in the early writers Ligon, Hickerin-gill, Blome, Trapham, Tryon, or even the more modern Douglas, any trace of the importation of corn or pulse into the W. Indies ; though, even in 1650,

\* In Letters on Slavery, p. 25. A friend has since told me, in London, that the benevolent clergyman Mr. Terril experienced the utility of the plough in raising provisions, on his sugar plantation, in Barbadoes.

Barbadoes contained 150,000 souls \* ; and, in 1661, was “pestered with a supernumerary glut of inhabitants †.” As for salted meat and fish, from New England and Virginia, Ligon, calculating on an establishment of thirty white servants, chiefly field-labourers, and one hundred Negro slaves, says that the feeding of them, “over and above the provisions which the plantations bear, will be no great matter.” He makes it only 100% yearly, being but half the annual expence of clothing the same servants and Slaves, in the coarsest and cheapest manner, and not a thirteenth part of the annual expenses of the plantation ‡. The other writers mention the importation of provisions, in a general way, meaning, no doubt, beef and pork and fish; for Dr. Douglas, who was in the W. Indies in 1717, though he enumerates salted provisions of all the species imported, does not mention grain of any kind §. The first hint I can find of the importation of corn, even into the crowded island of Barbadoes, is given by Oldmixon, about 1741; though he says that the population had then decreased ||. St. Christopher’s received but little provision of any kind from N. America, before the year 1750. The planters depended chiefly on island provisions, and occasional supplies from England ¶; in which we cannot suppose that *Indian* corn, the species all along meant, was included.

\* Ligon, pp. 43, 46, 119. Barbadoes was first settled in 1624.

+ Hickeringill’s Jamaica viewed, p. 17.

‡ Ligon’s Hist. of Barbadoes. pp. 113, 116.

§ Summary Hist. of Brit. Settl. in Amer. vol. 1. pp. 124, 133.

|| Brit. Emp. in America, vol. 1. p. 234, and vol. 2. p. 126.

¶ Robertson’s Tracts, p. 49, as quoted in P. C. Rep. p. 457.

All this is the more remarkable, as the vulgar notion that the "Caribbee islands are worn out," prevailed at least as early as the year 1672\*.

Sir Thomas Modiford who, after making a large fortune in Barbadoes, removed to Jamaica, of which he became Governor in 1663, says that, at the end of the first year of a new settlement, on wood-land, "you may be full of potatoes and *corn*; and, within two months of the new year, with plantains, and a small stock of hogs and fowls; so that you will be at no more charge for provisions for your servants †." I can find nothing more about provisions till 1740, when corn is not named among the importations of Jamaica; and it is expressly stated, in a work of undisputed authority, that "they do not want flour from the northern colonies; as they chiefly use yams, cassada-bread," &c. ‡ At any rate, flour is not commonly given to the Slaves, when in health. Another well informed anonymous writer of the same island, states in 1751, that "the Indian corn supplied by the N. Americans, *may* be spared, in a great measure, except in times of great dearth §." The opinion of Mr. Long, in 1774, was that "corn in abundance we *may* have of our own growth—far cheaper than we can buy it of the North Americans ||."

\* Blome's Descript. of Jamaica, Barbadoes, &c. 1672, p. 59.

† Sir T. Modiford's "Directions about a Cacao-walk," preserved by Blome, p. 18. See also Oldmixon, vol. 2. p. 310.

‡ Hist. of Jamaica, in 13 Letters, dated 1740, pp. 32, 336.

§ Inquiry concerning the Trade, &c. of Jamaica, written 1751, printed 1759, p. 18.

|| Hist. of Jamaica, vol. 1. p. 541; see also pp. 532, 551.

Mr. Edwards's account of this matter is somewhat different. Among the fourteen articles enumerated in the memorial to the Government, which he says he helped to prepare in 1785, grain and flour have no place! In his text, published in 1793, for ordinary readers, he affirms that the N. American grain and flour are "*essential*" to the W. Indies; admitting, however, that, for provisions (and even staves, with which we have no concern) Jamaica may find, and, in the American war, did find "some resource within herself\*." This concession, from so zealous an advo-

\* Hist. of the W. Indies, vol. 2. pp. 393, 415, 420, 424; see also vol. 1. p. 187, and Beckford, vol. 1. p. 310, and vol. 2. p. 388. From the above-mentioned memorial, it appears that the beef and pork supplied to the whole British W. Indies by the N. Americans, while colonists, amounted, at the ports of delivery, to 36,666*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* sterl. annually, or to not quite *eighteen-pence* a year for each of the 500,000 people said, in the same memorial, to inhabit the sugar islands. I know of nothing to match this, but Thurot plundering *seven* Scotch islands of *cattle* to the value of *three and sixpence*! See *Wilkes's Reports*! The American supplies of *all* kinds, without which the sugar islands are said to be exposed "to the risk of destruction," amounted annually to *eight and twenty shillings and nine pence* sterl. per head, on the population. But this is not inconsistent with the lumber, especially staves and heading, being necessary to the small islands, and for rum hds. even to Jamaica. The holiday *scraps* of beef and pork might very well be furnished in the islands. I have eaten pork salted in Barbadoes, after being kept six months, superior to Irish pork, and still more to American. Mr. Long tells us, he has eaten pork, salted in Jamaica, a year old, vol. 2. p. 519. But he says that fresh meat is generally cheaper in that island than salted, *id.* pp. 167, 304. The Newfoundland fish, or herrings from Scotland or Ireland, are convenient for all the islands, if not absolutely necessary; for it is generally allowed, that a vegetable and corn diet, without salt, or salted provisions of some kind, is apt to give the Slaves bowel complaints.

cate for foreign supplies, may be fairly regarded as an acknowledgement that imported grain is quite unnecessary for Jamaica, in ordinary times. Even according to his own statement, the supply from N. America to all the islands did not amount to an annual bushel to each inhabitant of those islands! And, by the first set of accounts in the Report of the Committee on the commercial state of the W. India Colonies, July 1807, it appears, that, in the preceding year, the grain imported from these kingdoms for five sugar plantations, amounted to only 2s.6d. sterl. for each Negro! These imported pittances may indeed be necessary to keep the poor people *alive*; and certainly tend to show on what ticklish contingencies the subsistence of the Slaves is suffered to depend; and how easily they might not only be kept *alive*, but kept in *plenty*, by grain raised in the islands.

Finally, the President of Barbadoes, on opening the Session of the Legislature, in Aug. 1807, recommends "the strictest attention to the production of the necessaries of life;" and, in October of the same year, the Lieut. Governor of Jamaica addressed the Council and Assembly in similar language; which indeed is often used on such occasions, by the Governors of the islands. How lamentable is it that cultivators of the earth need to be earnestly admonished by their chief magistrates to secure, in the *first* place, the means of independent subsistence \*!

\* According to private letters, a proper spirit of independence on foreign supplies, appeared in Jamaica early in 1809; and it was expected that, when the Assembly should meet, a duty would be laid on all American produce imported.

The danger of depending on a distant country for daily bread, was, to my knowledge, fatally experienced in Barbadoes, in the year 1777; and it will not be foreign to my subject to state what I can remember of that melancholy conjuncture, at this distance of time. In consequence of an almost unequalled density of population\*, the planters of that island had generally made the culture of provisions a part of the regular plantation business, and not a bye-job, as in most of the other islands. The ten-acre-men, also, when cotton was little in demand, raised such quantities of provisions as often to supply, more or less, some of the other islands, especially the new ones; which, without this assistance, would probably never have been settled. Yet not a few of the planters, particularly when produce was in demand, neglected their provision grounds†, and relied too much on American corn; though not only naturally much inferior to their own, but often heated and damaged in the vessels. Towards the end of every year, scarcity was more or less felt‡; and the Slaves habitually divided their year into “the crop-time, and the hard time,” or “the plenty time, and the

\* Barbadoes is perhaps the most thickly peopled island in the world, except Malta. Barbadoes on a surface of 106,000 acres, of which 80,000 are productive, contains at least 100,000 people. Malta, on about 82,000 acres, contains 150,000 people. But the latter is closely surrounded by rich countries, and is very near to Sicily, the granary of ancient Rome; whereas Barbadoes, in an emergency, cannot have provisions in less than voyages of 7 or 8 weeks, to and from the nearest country capable of supplying her. See Supp. to P. C. Rep. pp. 31, 35, and Playfair's Statistical Breviary, p. 48.

† See Dean Nickolls's Letter, p. 36.

‡ This is the case, at present, in Jamaica, and, it is to be feared, in other islands. See Mathison's Notices, p. 32.

hungry time ;" their looks, at the respective seasons, proving the justness of their distinction. The supply of corn from the northward, being proportioned to the probable demand, was apt to fall short of the real one, or to exceed it ; so that the market of the islands was alternately starved and glutted, with commodities whose perishable nature require immediate sale. I have seen Indian corn selling at 10s. curr. and even two dollars per bushel, reduced, by the arrival of the " Nor'ward men," about Christmas, to 2s. 6d. or less, in two or three weeks. Thus the dealers last 'at market, made bad voyages, and did not return till they heard that we were starving.

Such was the ordinary course of things till 1776, when the Americans issued their non-intercourse declaration. It made little impression in Barbadoes ; as it was thought that the people would not be disposed to obey it, nor the new government able to enforce it. But this was a fatal mistake. Christmas approached, arrived, and passed ; but not a single Nor'ward man appeared. Alarm soon began to prevail ; and, though the dry season had commenced, every hand was set to plant corn. Three times it was planted, in most places, and almost every where failed. Alarm was now succeeded by despair. The famine had begun. The poor of the land, both white and black, were dropping down in the streets, or silently pining and expiring in their cottages. Labour was in a great measure suspended. Some allowed their Slaves to shift as they could in the day, provided they came home and slept in their cabins at night. Others collected them in the field ; and let them work as they pleased. Others  
again,



again, who from particular circumstances, were able to give their Slaves nearly their usual allowance, seemed to abate but little from their labour; not considering that that allowance was, at *no* time, sufficient for labouring people, independently of their own shifts, which were then unavailing. It was altogether an affecting scene\*; and one's own little sufferings were forgotten, in the general distress.

The Legislature met and deliberated. An earnest application was transmitted to the British Ministry, who, after waiting to ascertain whether it was not an outcry raised to disconcert their hopeful plans in America, ordered out a large shipment of provisions to be sold, under the control of the Governor, for prime cost and charges. It is but just to add, that Messrs. Mure, Son, and Atkinson of London, the merchants employed, generously gave up their commissions. In the interval between the date of the application, and the arrival of the provisions, the European ships, as usual, brought out some supplies; and, if I rightly remember, some few prize cargoes, and casual vessels helped to alleviate the calamity. But so it was, that the immediate deaths were fewer than might have been apprehended; though many afterwards sank into the grave, from the consuming want they had suffered.

This dear-bought lesson was not lost on Barbadoes. The planters universally returned to the natural, and now necessary practice of raising their own corn; and such was their success, that in less than two years, they were able to repay the liberal assistance of the Govern-

\* The 14th chap. of the patriotic prophet Jeremiah, then appeared uncommonly impressive and pathetic.

ment, by an ample and *gratuitous* supply of live stock, corn, and vegetables of all kinds, to the brave British garrison, then languishing and dying at St. Lucia. Never was a generous popular act\* done with a better grace, or more hearty good-will.

All reliance on N. America, for prime necessities, was now happily at an end. I do not know that the want of any one Nor'ward article but lumber, especially staves, was seriously felt. The staves of Hamburgh, through London, were generally dear, and not always to be had. In short, with this exception, the planters declared their independence on America. Early in 1780, I happened to dine with a respectable and pretty numerous company, of whom Mr. Steele, then newly arrived, was one; and the pleasure of being introduced to him, makes me remember the circumstance. He had brought with him from England, the common notion that the W. Indian colonies could not exist without American corn. But I well remember that the unanimous opinion of the gentlemen, chiefly intelligent planters of different political sentiments, was that, in ordinary seasons, Barbadoes wanted no corn from America, or any other country. This doctrine was new to Mr. Steele, and he did not appear all at once to acquiesce in it. His own happy experience, however, seemed in the sequel to have convinced him

\* I call it a popular act, though sanctioned by a vote of the Legislature; for it was difficult to say whether the Legislature or the People at large were most forward on this occasion; and indeed on every other, in which they could manifest their attachment to the King and the Parent Country. *O! si sic omnia.*

of its truth. See p. 13, above. In October of the same year, (1780) the great hurricane desolated the island. But, with that dreadful exception to all general rules, I do not know that Barbadoes required any considerable supply of corn, from the year 1777 till 1800. I may venture to affirm, from personal observation, that it did not, during the first nine years of that period. And I should have observed sooner, that, upon the whole, the provisions imported into Barbadoes were believed to fall short of the supplies afforded to the other islands, and to the numerous shipping which call there, as the most windward station. In 1800, however, an extraordinary drought produced a scarcity which was severely felt.

I shall not mention my own attempt to benefit the island, on that occasion, in a quarter where I was well entitled to attention. But I may at least repeat what has been, for many years, my declared opinion, that, in provinces so distant as the W. Indian islands are, from the seat of Government, and from all countries capable of relieving their wants, the respective Governors, in Council, should be empowered to open the ports, whenever scarcity is apprehended, to the ships of any nation, even a hostile one, freighted with *the prime necessities of life*; and to protect them from the rapacity and chicane of revenue officers. The paramount necessity of this case, silences all arguments which can be drawn from ordinary policy; and if more facts are wanted, I cannot do better than offer the substance of what has been stated, on a similar emergency, by a planter of Jamaica who, though living  
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on the spot, at the time, has not scrupled to animadvert severely on certain other public representations of the Assembly of that island.

“The four months,” says Mr. Wynne \*, “allowed by the Lieut. Governor’s proclamation after the storms of 1780 and 1781, for importing provisions in foreign bottoms, were, in effect, but two months. From the North Americans alone, could we expect adequate supplies; and allowing a month for the proclamation to reach them, and a month for the passage of the ships†, there remained but two months for the collection of the cargoes. Towards the end of the third month, they would be fearful of contrary winds detaining their vessels after the time limited, and of being seized. For, to add to the calamity, the revenue officers, sent about that time, from Britain, seemed to be pettifoggers, or men instructed by them, how to make the letter of the law destroy its spirit; so that foreigners were terrified from our ports. The prolongation of one month could do little good; for by the time it could reach foreigners, it would be expired or expiring. But no man blamed the Lieut. Governor, knowing him to be tied down, by orders from home.

“The Negroes had been so debilitated by former want, that they sank under the return of famine, and dropped off in numbers.

“Horrible indeed,” continues Mr. W. “was the

\* In Notes on the two Reports, from the Committ. of the Hon. Assemb. of Jamaica, of 16 Oct. and 12 Nov. 1788, pp. 40—42.

† This is an average from the different ports in America. But it often happens that a voyage from New England to Jamaica is not made in less than 7 or 8 weeks. Oldmixon, vol. 1. p. 167.

tragedy after the fifth hurricane in 1786; and so far have the committee been from exaggerating it, by stating the loss at 15,000 lives, that I am convinced, by much inquiry, that they are stated too low by several thousands. This is not dictated by resentment from my own losses; for thanks be to God, I foresaw and provided against the droughts and famines; so as not to lose a Negro by want. They rather seemed to the neighbours, more vigorous than usual; from being compared with the famine-worn creatures on other plantations. Hence arose inquiries about my management in feeding them; and I have been assured, that beside preserving my own Negroes, I have been a mean of saving some thousands more.

“ Beside the multitude which perished by the famine, and which various relations convince me exceeded 21,000, I do firmly believe that far more were so broken down that they gradually pined away; but, as they died not during the scarcity, their death was attributed to fluxes, &c. not considering that these were induced by the preceding famine. Now were all the lives lost in the actual scarcity, added to the greater number who fell afterward by its effects, the sum would be horrible! Had the latter hurricane occurred ten days sooner, much of the great corn [Indian corn, or maize] then just got in, would have been lost. Universal famine would have ensued, and the island have been depopulated; for every inferior species of provision had been before exhausted. Unthinking people said that the destruction which occurred, and the general destruction which, by Divine Mercy, we barely escaped, were the inevitable works of God. The tempests,

pests, droughts, and famines, were so, no doubt ; and wrought for wise, and ultimately gracious purposes. But if the death of so many poor Slaves is to be attributed to Providence, it must not be to its operation on the elements, so much as to the blindness which was suffered to come over the Government ; so far as to tie down the Governor of a colony 5000 miles distant, and to hazard not only its property and happiness, but its very existence, rather than that he should depart from regulations made in Britain.” Thus far Mr. Wynne, almost in his own words.

He has not said here *how* he, and those who followed his example, provided against the famines ; but it could only be by raising plenty of provisions, which indeed appears (by p. 10) to have been his ordinary practice. Speaking of the Jamaica consolidated Slave law of 1788, Mr. W. says (p. 23) that, “the giving in to the vestry an account, on oath, of the quantity of land\* in provisions” (worked by the whole gang, and beside the patches cultivated by each Negro, on Sundays) “and of clothing furnished to the Negroes, will have the best effects.” But in this he has been disappointed. The clause he alludes to, was introduced to guard against the famines consequent on hurricanes ; but no

\* The Consol. Slave law of 1788, required an acre to be kept in provisions for every four Slaves. That of 1792, reduced the proportion to an acre for every ten Slaves. This is evidently too little. We have seen that Mr. Steele allows each person of his first gang half an acre, and each of his second gang one-third of an acre, and that a whole acre kept in provisions by the *proprietor*, would not maintain a single Negro, on an average, allowing for the negligence, waste, and theft, inseparable from the present mode. See pp. 127, 128, above.

such catastrophe having happened for many years, that clause “is *now* no better than waste paper.” *Now* as formerly, “the *general* practice, from one end of Jamaica to the other,” is to give the Slaves nothing in addition to the produce of their own grounds; in other words, to famish those whose ground is rendered unproductive by drought, or by their own sickness, age, weakness, or weariness \*. To expect the Slaves in general, worn down as very many of them are, by daily, and, in crop time, by nightly labour, to support themselves, by working on Sundays, in their own grounds; —to trust to the desultory, heartless exertions of such beings, to *avert famine!* is, to say the least of it, extremely impolitic. I purposely say impolitic, because such a practice can have no tendency to dispose Government to suspend the navigation-laws, and open the ports to foreign provisions, in favour of men so careless, or so helpless, as to neglect egregiously their own abundant internal resources.

Certainly the admission of foreign provisions, in consequence of tempest, drought, or other unavoidable calamities, should be no precedent to the planters to depend on a resource of which they often felt the inadequacy, even before there was any restraint on the American trade. Yet there is reason to believe, that this dependence had some such origin. Occasional supplies would give store-keepers and town-agents an opportunity of persuading the planters that it was cheaper to buy than to raise provisions, as well as

\* See Long, vol. 2. p. 490; R. Browne, the English ploughman's Letter from Jamaica, in Lett. on Slavery, p. 116; Mathison's Notices, pp. 30, 32; above all, Abst. Evid. p. 58, Edin. ed.

Slaves. How can we else account for the opulent, early proprietors raising their own corn, while many of the present, comparatively poor, planters buy more or less imported grain? Needy and thoughtless people, it may be believed, would be too easily induced to swallow the new doctrine. Hence, gradually getting the supply of the sugar estates into their own hands, the town-agents, though originally mere clerks, with very paltry salaries\*, acquired the name and the business of merchants, and often the very estates of their employers.

It is probable that this kind of management, with regard to salted provisions, &c. commenced very early. For even Ligon (p. 113) advised young planters, above 160 years ago, to have factors in N. America to provide them with beef, pork, fish, &c. "or else their charge will be treble." The supply of corn evidently came much later into mercantile hands. I shall not here repeat what I have elsewhere stated † concerning the frequent bad quality and large price of the articles furnished by town-agents, and other dealers, to involved planters; nor the consequences both to them and their Slaves. It is plainly a miserable mode of supply for both; but, with regard to corn, easily superseded; if indeed *such* planters might venture to raise their own corn, without giving offence! But the truth is, that, the expences of a sugar plantation being always great, and its wants often urgent, while the returns are quite uncertain, when once a proprietor gets involved with his town-agent (to say nothing here of other mercantile men) he has no longer a will of his

\* See the Hon. H. Frere's Short History of Barbadoes, p. 116.

† See Letters on Slavery, p. 39.



own, but becomes a cypher on what is called, for the convenience of others, *his* property; standing, as long as he is able to stand, to all the losses; the profits, when there are any, going to his creditors.

By far the greater part of the labour is bestowed on the canes, both by dependent and independent proprietors. Canes indeed require, acre for acre, perhaps ten times as much labour as provisions \*, and are in general three or four times as long on the ground. I do not recollect any species of ground-provisions, except yams and Indian corn, which call for any considerable labour or manure. That noble grain, Guinea corn †, requires comparatively little of either. A plantain-walk, with occasional cleaning, and dung, when it can be spared, will bear for 15 or 20 years. The sweet potatoe is reproduced from the small roots left in the ground, or from its vines, or creepers, trampled in by the Negroes in digging them. It would be tedious to dwell on the several kinds of boiling and roasting eddoes, the many species of beans and peas, pompions, squashes, okras, &c. &c. all of them wholesome or nutritious, and easily produced. But the canes engross more labour and manure than all of them put together! On the canes depend the returns of the plantations, and the character and bread of the managers. Yet the event often proves this to be very bad œconomy; almost as bad as it would be for our farmers to neglect all other crops for the sake of hemp or flax, which, after all, should often fail. For the canes, after

\* Nickolls, p. 37. † *Holcus Sorghum*, LINN. I never saw a specimen of Guinea corn, in this country, except one which I myself presented, with other tropical productions, to my friend, the late Dr. Walker, Prof. Nat. Hist. Edin.

all this labour and cost, after starving everything else, and cumbering the ground for sixteen months, often fail so completely as not to defray charges; whereas the comparatively neglected provision-ground, like a grateful step-child, hardly ever fails to do this, and often a great deal more. It would be difficult to name one species of provisions, which yields not a far more certain crop than canes, cotton, or any other article raised for exportation. So Providence has ordered it, or rather man *disordered* it, by constantly loading the land with those exportable kinds, without a thorough breaking-up, or well digested manure, or proper fallow, or rotation of crops. Hence, no doubt, the old story, before mentioned, that Barbadoes and the Leeward islands are worn out. But this story must be false, or this and other countries which have been for many centuries under cultivation, must have been sterilized ages ago. It is indeed generally allowed, that land, properly managed, cannot be worn out.

These remarks may help to account for the fertile West Indian islands looking to the distant, and comparatively barren regions of North America, for a portion of their daily bread. This curious phenomenon is partly owing to the mercantile connections of the planters, and partly to the preference of exportable produce to provisions, and of the hoe to the plough. In the W. Indies, the hoe still maintains its barbarous domination; and hence, in a great measure, the scanty meals of the Slaves, and the short crops of the Planters. In North America, at least in New England, that miserable tool was very early superseded by the plough. The poor savages of that country, who did not much  
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value their time, used to plant their Indian corn, in holes "scraped" in the ground, nearly in the same primitive way now practised in the sugar islands.

But, says a most respectable old writer\*, "The English have now taken a better way of planting, by the help of the plough, in this manner: in the planting time, they plough single furrows through the whole field, about six feet asunder, more or less, as they see convenient. To these they plough others across, at the same distance. Where these meet, they throw in the corn, and cover it either with the hoe, or by running another furrow with the plough. When the weeds begin to overtop the corn, then they plough over the rest of the field, between the planted furrows, and so turn in the weeds. This is repeated when they begin to hill the corn with the hoe; and so the ground is better loosened than with the hoe, and the roots of the corn have more liberty to spread. Where any weeds escape the plough, they use the hoe.

"The fields thus ploughed for this corn, after the crop is off, are almost as well fitted for English corn, especially summer grain, as peason or summer-wheat; as if, lying fallow, they had a very good summer tilth.

"The Indians and some English, especially in good ground, at every corn-hill, plant with the corn, a kind of French or Turkey beans; the stalks of the corn serving instead of poles for the beans to climb up with. And, in the vacant places between the hills, they will plant squashes or pominions, loading the ground with

\* Governor Winthrop who presided over Massachusetts, A. D. 1630; in the Phil. Trans. No. 142. See also Oldmixon, vol. 1. pp. 59, 67.

as much as it will bear. And many, after the last weeding, sprinkle turnip-seed between the hills, and so, after the harvest, have a good crop of turnips. The stalks of this corn, cut up before too much dried, are good winter fodder for cattle. But they usually leave them on the ground for the cattle to feed on. The husks about the ear are good fodder, given for change sometimes, after hay. The Indian women slit them into narrow parts, and so weave them artificially into baskets of several fashions."

The culture of Indian corn, at present, in Pennsylvania, is quite similar to that above-described by Gov. Winthorp; except that the hoe does not appear to be used at all, in the operation \*.

If you should ask—I beg pardon—if any uninformed reader should ask, What makes this difference, in point of improvement, between New England and the West Indies? In answer, I could only repeat the burden of my song—Slavery. The New Englanders had few artificial wants, and fewer Slaves. There was no "calling of Quasheba to call Quamino†." Every man was obliged to work. His Excellency Governor Winthorp himself, did the duty of both horse and rider. We find this "gentleman of birth and character, padding of it on foot," for 40 miles, when the duties of his high station required it‡. And, in the memoir above quoted, we find him condescending to describe the homely dishes of the Indians, and the poor

\* Cooper's Information respecting America, p. 137.

† Yet some of the most respectable people in the W. Indies, bring up their children to do every thing for themselves, which mere external decency will permit.

‡ Oldmixon, vol. 1. p. 61.

English colonists ;—just as my lamented friend, Governor Hay, used to insist on one of the humble messes of the Negroes and poor White people \* being placed on his otherwise decently fashionable table ; by way of doing, as he said, all the honour he could to the standing dish of the land he lived in. Communities with such men at their heads, cannot fail to flourish, or when public duty demands it, to accommodate themselves, in a manly way, to humble, or even trying circumstances. The rudiments of the respectable communities of New England, were formed by honest labour ; and their present conduct appears to accord with so virtuous a beginning. I allude to their patriotic and spirited endeavours to avert an unnatural war with this kingdom, which appears to be evidently reviving the ancient amity of the Parent Country.

I have already digressed so far, that, if you have a mind to see a contrast of the different conditions of the people in the Free and the Slave-states of America, I must refer you to Sutcliff's late Travels on that continent, printed in 1811, a little work which abounds with interesting information. In the Free States, every thing wears the appearance of plenty and contentment. In the Slave-states (p. 98) "even girls of ten or twelve years of age, are seen walking the streets, with baskets on their heads, without any clothing."—"At the houses of what are called gentlemen, young blacks are seen

\* A thick basty pudding made of Indian or Guinea corn-meal and water, with a little salt. It is called *côcôcô*. I know not how to spell it, having never seen the word in print. But I knew well how to eat it ; and, like many other Europeans, preferred it, or plantains, to the best wheaten bread.

waiting at table, quite naked," &c. &c. I shall not shock you with any of the instances of injustice and cruelty which Mr. S. relates.

To return to the West Indies : it is allowed that the same quantity of sugar might be obtained from much less land than is now planted with canes. In Barbadoes, too many acres are put under canes, by one-third, or at least one-fourth ; in St. Kitts by one-fourth ; and, in Jamaica, Mr. Long affirms that a given extent of land " produces not so much sugar as might be gained from one-half, or even one-third of the same land judiciously bread-landed \*." Here then is a resource, amply sufficient for the operations of the plough, in raising provisions and provender, even in the old small islands, and still more in Jamaica and the Ceded Islands. In short, the plough, the minister of abundance, must be adopted in the West Indies, if the Slaves are to be eased and fed so as on the whole to preserve, or considerably increase, their numbers. Without this powerful auxiliary, it is to be feared that even Mr. Steele's improvements will not be found effectual ; unless such men as he, could be found to execute them. But the truth is, that no improvements can prevent human beings from being more or less injured by those toils which God, in his goodness, hath assigned to quadrupeds.

At all events, the present system, if persisted in, must, in a few years, bring itself to an end. For proof, I appeal to the returns made to the Assembly of Jamaica,

\* Nickolls, p. 36 ; P. C. Rep. p. 459 ; Long, vol. 1. pp. 440, 441.

in Dec. 1810; whereby it appears that the Slaves charged with the poll-tax \*,

In the year 1809, were - - 323,714

In the year 1810, - - 313,483

Leaving a deficit of - - 10,231

“ a most frightful instance,” says Mr. Mathison, “ of depopulation, which will probably be handled by the Assembly as a proof of the impolicy and injustice of the law for abolishing the Slave-trade ”—precisely what was predicted in the prospectus to ~~the~~ <sup>this</sup> work, first published in Oct. 1808 ; but, before, ~~app~~ <sup>it</sup> formally brought forward, it would be premature to “ consider it as affording a clear demonstration of gross mismanagement on the part of the planters †.”

I have elsewhere animadverted ‡ as closely as I could, before any evidence was published, on no less than twelve alleged, not to say pretended, causes of the decrease of the Slaves, in the islands, where they were then supposed to decrease. Mr. Mathison reduces the *true* causes to four. “ 1st. The loss of children by the *tetanus*, or locked jaw. 2dly. A scarcity of the means of subsistence. 3dly. Excessive labour. 4thly. Poverty in a variety of shapes.” Now, considering the word subsistence as including *all* the necessities of life, the second and third may be said to

\* The poll-tax, or head-levy, as it is more commonly called, is unfavourable to the natural increase of the Slaves ; and is condemned by all good writers, French and English. See Long, vol. 1. p. 414 ; D'Auberteuil, tom. 2. p. 201 ; the Baron Wimpfen, p. 69 ; Raynal, vol. 4. p. 264.

† Notices respecting Jamaica, p. 18.

‡ Letters on Slavery, p. 153.

comprehend the whole. For poverty is only scarcity of the means of subsistence, and the locked jaw is generally no more than a consequence of poverty; inasmuch as the children of the whites and of domestic Negresses, who are brought into the world by proper midwives, and properly attended to during early infancy (as well as their mothers) are seldom attacked by it \*.

Now the plough is happily calculated to abate, and, if universally adopted, to remove both these grand causes of depopulation;—Excessive labour directly, as hath been already proved; and Poverty both indirectly, by allowing the Slaves time to attend to their own concerns, and especially the women to their children; and directly, by affording them all a sufficiency of provisions.

This may serve also as an answer to an objection I have lately heard or read, to the cultivation of canes by the plough (to the raising of provisions by it, I repeat that I never heard a single objection) namely, that if the Slaves were exempted from holing for canes, they would not have sufficient employment out of crop, and in the crop, every hand is in requisition. But if any farther answer than the above is wanted, it may be found in the remark of Mr. Long †, that were the plough adopted, “the remainder of the able hands might be occupied about other necessary work, of which there is always sufficient on a large plantation.” But the objection is really futile in itself; and directly

\* Abridg. Evid. before H. of Comm. No. 4. pp. 26, 34, 44, 52, 85, 119; Wynne, p. 53; Mathison, p. 30; Collins, p. 140.

† History of Jamaica, vol. 1. p. 450.



contrary to the statement, that the Slaves are short of their due complement; and to the fact, that very many gangs require the help of hired labourers.

Mr. Steele (p. 32, above) and others compute that sugar plantations, acre for acre, now require thrice as many hands, as they did in Ligon's time, and yield not a third of their former produce, nor a fourth of their clear profits. Is it possible to conceive stronger inducements for abridging human labour, by all practicable means, even if no decrease of of labourers were apprehended? The want of labourers, as we have seen, or rather of Slaves, soon taught the New Englanders to use the plough. And what but the Slave-system, the everlasting enemy to all improvement, physical and moral, could have prevented the West Indians, as well as the New Englanders, from practising the agricultural arts of their common Mother-country? The scarcity and high wages of servants and day-labourers, especially during the American war, obliged the corn farmers in Scotland to try whether they could not plant potatoes with the plough, and do without the young man who drove the plough-team. After some pains and trouble, both experiments completely succeeded. In ploughing for potatoes and every other crop, the same man now holds the plough and drives the horses; occasionally stimulating them, by slapping the reins against their sides; and the work is done with surprising facility and neatness\*. In the same part of the country,

\* A friend of mine lately saw in Scotland, a young lad, or rather boy, ploughing alone with two horses. "He whistled as he went," and was making very neat work, but not very deep. Such lads used to go to school in the winter evenings.

the threshing machine\* has since been contrived, and generally adopted, and from similar motives. I have seen one of those engines, with fanners, mill, and all their apparatus, driven by one water-wheel, and under the same roof with a kiln. The sheaves were thrown in, from the adjoining stack-yard, at one door, and the meal, &c. carried out at another. But why multiply such instances, when it is notorious that the various and complicated manufactures of these kingdoms, owe their superiority chiefly to machinery †, most of it invented, by natives of the country, in the memory of us all? Many operations are now performed intirely by machinery, which would have been pronounced impossible, thirty or forty years ago. The planters appear to be sensible of the utility of those admirable improvements. Some of them are adopting the steam-engine, —the costly and complicated steam-engine‡, to relieve their mill-cattle; and why not the cheap and simple

\* The attempts at a reaping machine are likely to succeed at last. That which has been mentioned to me, would in all probability answer for cutting sugar canes. It seems at once simple and powerful. But I must know more about it, before I venture to recommend it. Many years ago, the reverend and usefully ingenious Mr. Cartwright conversed with me about a machine for *clipping* down sugar canes; and which undoubtedly would have answered, had it been possible to make the canes grow in narrow, straight, and upright rows.

† On the vast importance of machinery in our manufactures, see an ingenious pamphlet signed Jasper Wilson; but generally ascribed to the late able Dr. Currie of Liverpool.

‡ St. Venant strongly recommends the steam-engine, which he says (pp. 436, 462) will cost, when set up in St. Domingo, and exclusive of the ordinary mill-work, from 7 to 800*l.* sterl. which I am told, would be about the prime cost in this country. Such a sum would pay for a good many ploughs and cattle,

plough,

plough, to relieve their Slaves? It is at least natural to suppose that the cattle spared by the engine, will be yoked to the plough. If they should not; in short, if the plough should not be adopted, and its use in good earnest persevered in, probably few people acquainted with the circumstances, and least of all the British Legislature, will pay any attention to their lamentable complaints of the want of hands. The truth is, that many sugar plantations already contain more labourers than some whole parishes in this country; but do not a tithe of work; because they have no interest in it, nor any help from cattle and proper implements.

If any one disposed to be jocular, should say that I represent the plough as a sort of *catholicon*, for all the evils of Slavery, he would mistake my meaning; which was only to show (and I hope this hath been done satisfactorily) that the plough would greatly alleviate, if not wholly prevent want and excessive labour, and all their deplorable effects. But this is not saying that these are the *only* evils of the Slave-system.

I am, &c.

W. D.

P. S. You will observe that, in the above letter, I have not touched on the controverted question relative to the intercourse between our Sugar Islands and the American States; except in so far as that intercourse may be occasionally necessary for the preservation of life, in cases of drought, hurricanes, and other *unavoidable* calamities. On this part of the question, I take it for granted, that there can be but one opinion among men of ordinary candour and humanity.

LETTER

## LETTER X.

*Have any, and which of the Slave-laws been ever confirmed?*

Do any of the Slave-laws contain suspending clauses?—Were any of them ever confirmed?—Colonial Legislatures dislike suspending clauses—and perhaps justly, in some cases—but Slave-laws not among those cases—late in being enacted—when expired, not renewed for years—those of Barbadoes appear not to have been confirmed—Royal Instruction to Governor of that island, disregarded.—No suspending clause to be found in several Slave-laws.—Bermuda law of 1730, authorizing Slave-murder—impossible to believe it was ever confirmed—but such barbarous laws no certain proofs of the actual condition of Slaves—which can only be gathered from facts.

DEAR SIR,

THE learned and reverend Mr . . . ., one of *Philo-Xylon's* dialogists, having intimated (at p. 74, above) that the Barbadoes law which annuls the testimony of Negroes and their descendants against white persons, was “perhaps never confirmed,” I have been led to inquire, Whether *any* of the Slave-laws contain a clause suspending their operation till the King's pleasure thereupon is declared; and Whether, in point of fact, any of them have ever received the Royal Confirmation. I say in point of fact; this being a mere historical question, on which a man may venture to state, and reason upon, the authorities before him, without encroaching on the province of gentlemen of the law, and far less presuming to dogmatize on so important a question.

The Colonial Legislatures have all along been unwilling to insert suspending clauses in their statutes; and it is humbly conceived, that, in many cases, they  
are

are in the right. What those cases specifically are, I shall not take upon me to say : it will be sufficient to show that the Slave-laws have nothing either in their own nature, or in the reasons on which they are said to be founded, which can exempt them from the exercise of the Royal *Veto*, if thought expedient.

The Colonial Legislatures, as Mr. Steele has observed, enact their local laws \* under the express condition that they shall not be repugnant, but as near as may be to the laws of England. Their local laws have no force, strictly speaking, until the King's pleasure to that effect is known and declared. It may be granted, however, that, owing to the great distance and other causes, the waiting for the Royal Confirmation would very injuriously cramp the exercise of colonial legislation †. The utility and efficacy of many regulations depend entirely on their prompt and speedy execution ; and others are of a nature so entirely local, and so evidently beneficial, that it is impossible to object to their being immediately passed into laws. But, in enacting such laws, as Mr. Steele, sitting as a Judge, has pointed out, in his Charge to a Grand Jury, and

\* Or, "bye laws," 10Geo. III. c. 37; Oldmixon, vol. 2. p.453.

† This doctrine is recognised by the Crown itself, with regard to the Governor and Council of Jamaica, in the following Royal Instruction to Sir Thomas Lynch, in 1671.—"And, forasmuch as there are many things incident to that Government, for which it is not easy for us to prescribe such rules and directions for you, as our service, and the benefit of the colony may require ; instead of them, you are, with the advice of the Council, to take care therein as fully and effectually, as if you were instructed by us ; of which extraordinary cases, giving us due information, you shall receive further ratifications from us, as our service shall require."

which

which conclude *the property of the Whites, and the liberties and lives of the Blacks*, it ought to be carefully considered, Whether they are, or are not, agreeable to the laws of England. Being of very weighty concernment, they call for the mature deliberation both of the Colonial Legislatures and of the Executive Government of this country. And it does not appear that their enactment requires any haste that is incompatible with such mature deliberation.

The intelligent historian of Jamaica\* indeed begins a long catalogue of cases, in which he thinks the Legislature of the island could not wait for the expression of the King's pleasure, with—"Acts for the better order and government of Slaves;—the *transportation* of them by mortgagees" &c. "for highways, markets, buildings, tolls, turnpikes, nuisances," &c. &c. Now, to pass over this strange classification of laws for the transportation of unoffending men, with toll and turnpike acts, it really does not appear, that there is in the nature of the Slave-laws any thing violently urgent; or that, in fact, the Legislatures of the islands have been in any great haste to enact them. Jamaica, for example, was conquered in the year 1655. The civil government was settled a year or two after the restoration of Charles II. In 1673, the island contained 9,504 Slaves†: and yet it was not till ten years afterwards‡ that any law for their government appears to have been framed; and even that, as we shall see, having been disallowed

\* Long, vol. 1. p. 21.

† Long, vol. 1. p. 376.

‡ "An Act for regulating white servants" was passed in Jamaica in 1681. See P. C. Rep. p. 259; or, according to Abridg. Plantation Laws, p. 136, in 1682.

both by Charles II. and James II. no new statute seems to have replaced it till 1696 \*. Barbadoes was first colonized in the reign of James I. In the middle of the seventeenth century, the Slaves there amounted to no fewer than 100,000; and the first act for their government (for it refers to no anterior one) was not passed till the memorable year of the Revolution †.—Even in our times, the Consolidated Slave-law of Jamaica, which expired in Dec. 1784, was not followed by its successor, till Dec. 1787 ‡. Surely the Slaves must be very easily governed, or the Slave-laws very useless—when their very existence could be so long dispensed with!

After diligent search, I have not been able to find any trace of the Royal Sanction to any of the numerous Slave-laws now before me; or of any clause suspending their operation, till that sanction could be procured.—The only acts with suspending clauses, inserted in Hall's (authorized) edition of the Laws of Barbadoes, are, if I mistake not, No. 163, and No. 199 to 202, inclusive. The last four were enacted in Governor Grenville's time, subsequent to the 16th April, 1752, the date of the Royal Instruction with which he was commissioned, and which Mr. Steele in his Charge, p. 186 above, calls a "monitory presentment of the Sovereign against the unconstitutional laws of Barbadoes." But

\* See P. C. Report, p. 491. But this Act of 1696 remained of "doubtful construction," till it was explained by an Act of 1751. See p. 238 of the same.

† Ligon, pp. 43, 46. Hall's edition of the Laws of Barbadoes, No. 82, passed 1688, August 8.

‡ Two Jamaica Reports of 1788, p. 6; also p. 22 of Notes on the same, by Capt. Wynne of that island, whose severe remarks, on this and other occasions, I omit.

not one of the acts just mentioned relates to the government of the Slaves. And so little does the above Royal Instruction, though passed into a law in 1753, during the administration of President Weeks, appear to have been regarded, that the "Act concerning white servants," assented to by the same President, in 1755, expressly recognises and confirms all the absurd and cruel provisions of the Servants' Act of 1661 ; and this without any suspending clause, or other limitation whatsoever !

In the View of the Principles, &c. prefixed to the general collection of the Slave-laws in the Privy Council's Report, I find no mention of suspending clauses or of the Royal Confirmation, nor has any such provision or sanction met my eye in the Slave-laws themselves, there inserted. These, however, being arranged according to their subjects, the parts of the same acts are often disjoined ; so that it would be rash to affirm that the undivided originals had not the requisites just mentioned. Certain it is, that those requisites have no place in the Grenada Slave-law of 1788, or in the three Consolidated Slave-laws passed in Jamaica, in the years 1787, 1788, and 1792, respectively\*.

It would indeed be a gross libel on the British Government to suppose, that it had sanctioned, or even knowingly connived at, several of the laws, if they deserve the name, which have been passed in our colonies, and which, it is to be feared, are still virtually, if not actually, in force in some of them. To give one instance : The Act passed in Bermuda in the year 1730, "for

\* The Consolidated Slave-law of 1781, I have never seen *intire* ; some few copies of it having been printed in Jamaica only.



the security of the subject, to prevent the forfeiture of life and estate, upon killing a Negro or other Slave," states that "Whereas Negroes, Indians, Mulattoes, and other Slaves are very numerous within these islands, and that the wilful killing of such Slave as aforesaid (by the strict laws of England) comes within the penalty of murder, the judgment whereof is forfeiture of life and estate: And whereas the privileges of England are so universally extensive as not to admit of the least thing called Slavery, occasioned the making such laws for the preservation of each individual subject, in his or their lives, estates, and indisputable rights and properties; but here, in His Majesty's colonies and plantations in America, the cases and circumstances of things are wonderfully altered" [Qu. By what authority?] "for the very kindred, nay sometimes the parents of these unfortunate creatures (upon the coast of Africa) expose their own issue to perpetual bondage and Slavery, by selling them unto Your Majesty's subjects trading there \*, and from thence are brought to these and other Your Majesty's settlements in America, and consequently purchased by the inhabitants thereof, they being (for brutishness of their nature) no otherwise valued or esteemed amongst us than as our goods and chattels, or other personal estates:" it is *therefore* enacted, "That from and after the publication hereof, that if any person or persons

\* "It was a common vice of the *English*, when they were reduced to poverty, that, rather than endure it patiently, they exposed their own children to sale!" Giraldus Cambrensis, as quoted in Henry's Hist. of G. Britain, 8vo ed. vol. 6. p. 267. The whole passage is highly worthy of perusal.

whatsoever,

whatsoever, within these islands, being owner or possessor of any Negroes, Indians, Mulattoes, or other Slaves, shall, in the deserved correction or punishment of his, her, or their Slave or Slaves, for crimes or offences by them committed, or supposed to be committed, accidentally happen to kill any such Slave or Slaves, that then the aforesaid owner or possessor shall not be liable to any imprisonment, arraignment, prosecution, or indictment, or subject to any penalty or forfeiture whatsoever."

By clause 2. White persons killing Slaves, in pursuing them, when they have committed burglaries, &c. are exempted from prosecution.

Clause 3. "Provided always, and it is hereby enacted, by the authority aforesaid, that if any person or persons as aforesaid, shall maliciously and wilfully kill or destroy, or any manner of ways cause or procure to be killed or destroyed, any Slave or Slaves whatsoever, whereof he, she, or they, or any of them, are owners, that then and in every such case, the aforesaid person and persons, and each and every of them, shall forfeit and pay unto our Sovereign Lord the King, his heirs and successors, the full sum of ten pounds current money, to be employed for and towards the support of the government of these islands and the contingent charges thereof."

Clause 4. "But if it shall happen that any Slave or Slaves be wilfully killed as aforesaid, by any person or persons that is not owner thereof, that then the aforesaid person or persons, and each and every of them, shall forfeit and pay the full sum of ten pounds current,

rent money, to be employed to the uses before mentioned, and also pay to the owner or owners of all and every such Slave or Slaves, such sum and sums of money as the aforesaid Slave or Slaves so killed shall be valued at, as if then alive," &c.

Now it is impossible to suppose that this "establishment of iniquity by law" was ever sanctioned by the Government which gave the Bermudians their limited and conditional power of legislation. But it would not be just to infer, from this brutal statute, any *peculiar* cruelty to the Slaves. It is, on the contrary, generally acknowledged that the Bermudians are even better masters than the comparatively humane planters of Barbadoes, whose laws they have adopted and *improved*. These old colonies \* having been, for a long period, fully peopled, about ten generations of native whites and blacks have grown up together, in a degree of forbearance in the Whites and submission in the Blacks, unknown in the later settlements, where time has not yet smoothed down, in some degree, the asperities which *necessarily* grow out of the incompatible interests, and conflicting passions of Owner and Slave. But this is not saying, that statutes which *encourage* crimes and protect the perpetrators, should not be superseded by laws to prevent the one and punish the other. I only mean that the mere *letter* of the Slave-laws is not, *of itself*, an infallible criterion of the actual condition of the Slaves; which can only be gathered, from specific descriptions of that condition.

\* Bermuda was colonized in 1612, and Barbadoes, our oldest sugar colony, in 1624. Oldmixon, vol. 2. pp. 2, and 443.

And, on this head, a multitude of facts, some of them of a recent date, speak a language which it is impossible to misunderstand ! Those facts leave not a doubt in the mind, that the harshness of the Slave-laws is but little softened by the lenity of the general practice, in *any* of the Sugar islands. It would hardly be a fair question to ask, Whether I do not except those islands in which the Slave laws have been amended ? For the truth is, that I do not consider myself at full liberty to state *here* all that I think, and have all along thought, of those same amended Slave-laws.

Speaking of the laws actually in force, as a criterion of the real condition of a people, a writer of distinguished merit observes that—"The nature and spirit of a government, as it is actually exercised at a particular period, cannot always be collected, perhaps it can seldom be collected, from an examination of written laws, or the established forms of a constitution. These may continue the same for a long course of ages, while the government may be modified in its exercise, to a great extent, by gradual and undescribable alterations in the ideas, manners, and character of the people."—"In every country whatever, beside the established laws, the political state of the people is affected by an infinite variety of circumstances, of which *no words can convey a conception*, and which are to be collected only from actual observation \*."——*From actual observation*, I expressed my firm conviction †, five-and-twenty years ago, that "*no laws can reach the nameless and endless injuries which the*

\* Stewart's Philosophy of the Human Mind, p. 241.

† In Letters on Slavery, p. 37.

Blacks, &c. continually suffer from miscreant White men, *against whom their evidence is not, in any shape, admitted.*"

Your's, &c.

W. D.

## LETTER XI.

### *Farther Considerations on the Confirmation of the Slave-laws, &c.*

Mr. Long and Mr. Steele think colonial laws should be amended by Parliament.—Royal Instruction in favour of Servants and Slaves.—White Servants in W. Indies formerly little better treated than Slaves.—Charles II. and James II. refuse to confirm Jamaica law authorizing *Murder*.—This law passed in Jamaica, A. D. 1683, and in Barbadoes, in 1688.—To suppose it was ever confirmed, would be a gross calumny on the British Government.—People formerly kidnapped in England and Scotland, and sold in W. Indies.—White underlings, now or lately, ill treated on too many sugar estates.—In W. Indies, much *drudgery*, little *industry*—Christianity favours liberty.—In Barbadoes many Proprietors reside—and hence Slaves better treated.—The writer offers no opinion of his own on amendment of Slave-laws by Parliament.

SIR,

THOUGH our Colonists object, and apparently with good reason, against their ordinary local laws being fettered, in the first instance, and often frustrated in their effects, by a suspending clause; yet they find no fault with the constitutional exercise of the Royal assent; or even, in some cases, with the interference of Parliament. Mr. Steele expresses his conviction that "no Proprietor of character in Barbadoes could or would oppose the repeal of the unconstitutional laws of that island,

island, *if done in England.*" And Mr. Long, writing on the affairs of Jamaica, says that "The system of colonial government, and the imperfection of their several laws, are subjects which never were, but which ought to be, strictly canvassed, examined and amended by the British Parliament." In another place, he observes that, "In the English colonies, no systematic order prevails; almost every thing with respect to their policy, their taxation \*, the administration of government and justice, their population and trade is wrong, or left to chance †."

If colonial arrangements had not been "left to chance," would such a law as that of Bermuda, quoted in my last letter, have been suffered to disgrace the reign of George II.? when in the reign of *James II.* the following Royal Instructions were given to the Duke of Albemarle, Governor of Jamaica, and probably to his predecessor Col. Molesworth, and which it is but right to put down to the credit of that unhappy monarch; because both he and his Royal Brother Charles II. are charged ‡ with having been adventurers in the African Slave-trade, and the latter with being concerned in buccaneering.—The instructions are these :

\* Mr. Long seems to mean their *internal* taxation; but if he had witnessed, as I have done, the grinding oppression of the  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. *impost*, he would have spoken with more caution, on that subject. Mr. Edwards every where mentions it with a kind of irritable jealousy. I believe it is generally agreed, that the internal taxes of the colonies, ought to be laid by their own legislatures alone.

† History of Jamaica, vol. 1. pp. 96, 403.

‡ See Long, vol. 1. p. 626; Edwards, vol. ii. pp. 45, 46.

“ You shall endeavour to get a law passed, for restraining of any unhuman severity, by reason of ill masters and overseers, that may be used towards their *Christian servants or other Slaves* \*. And you are also, with the assistance of the Council and Assembly, to find out the best means to facilitate and encourage the conversion of the Negroes to the Christian religion.

“ And whereas, amongst the laws passed in Jamaica, the 5th of April, 1683” (during Sir Thomas Lynch’s second government) “ An Act for regulating Slaves was transmitted unto His late Majesty,” (King Charles II.) “ who did not think fit to confirm the same, by reason of a clause therein contained, whereby such as wantonly and wilfully kill a Negro, are only liable to a fine, and three months imprisonment ; which penalties not being equal to the guilt, might encourage the wilful shedding of blood ; for which it is necessary some better provision be made, to deter all persons from such acts of cruelty ; you are therefore to signify the same unto the next Assembly, and farther propose to them the enacting a stricter clause in that behalf, which may be fit for our Royal Confirmation.”

\* These words, though hypothetical, are but too descriptive of the actual case. For the indented White servants were then but little better treated than the Negro-slaves. See No. 30, of Hall’s edition of the Laws of Barbadoes, also the Jamaica Servant Act, in Abridg. Plant. Laws, p. 136.—Mr. Hall, in his List of expired Laws, p. 484, acknowledges, that the Barbadoes Act of January 1685, for “ governing rebels convict,” namely, the misguided followers of the Duke of Monmouth, made their condition “ as bad as, if not worse than, that of the Negroes ;” but he adds that “ King William was pleased to release them from servitude, and the Act was repealed, in March 1690.”

From

From the last of these Royal Instructions, it appears that, contrary to what is commonly believed, Jamaica preceded Barbadoes, in enacting the sanguinary law thus disallowed \*. For we see that the law marked by the Royal disapprobation, as it "might encourage the wilful shedding of blood," was passed, in Jamaica, on the 5th of April, 1683; in the reign of Charles II. and rejected by him and James II. in Barbadoes, on the 8th of Aug. 1688; so near the close of the reign of James II. that, if confirmed at all, it must have been confirmed by William III. and in Bermuda†, as we have seen, in the year 1730; in the reign of George II.

Now would it not be a gross calumny on the memories of William III. and George II. to suppose that they sanctioned provincial statutes so iniquitous as to have been disallowed, with marks of dignified displeasure, in the worst times of the Stuarts? If it should

\* Among other authors, Mr. Long (vol. 2. p. 493) says that the Negro code of Jamaica was copied from that of Barbadoes; and I made the same mistake, respecting the above law, in Lett. on Slav. 169. The *disallowed* Jamaica statute of 1683, is stated as the law of that island, in Abridg. Plant. Laws, printed in 1704, p. 147; and also in the Hist. of Jamaica, in 13 Letters, printed in 1740, p. 223. The law of 1696, indeed, makes the wanton killing of a Negro felony, with benefit of clergy, for the first offence, and murder, in the second offence. But this law of 1696, seems not to have been known as the law of Jamaica, either in 1704 or 1740; and this is the more probable, as it was explained and confirmed, by the legislature of that island, in 1751. See P. C. Rep. p. 138.

† We only refer to the Slave-laws of Jamaica, Barbadoes, and Bermuda; but the Slave-laws of all or most of the colonies, are, or were, of the same iniquitous cast. See particularly the Laws of Virginia, in the Abridg. of Plantation Laws, p. 66.



be alleged that William signed the commission for the massacre of Glencoe, then it is to be hoped, that the lame apology usually offered for that infamous deed, will also be admitted; namely, that he signed it among a number of other papers, without knowing its contents,—and this will place the colonial law, just where it ought to stand,—on the same footing with the Glencoe commission. That bloody document, however, never formed a part of Scottish law, as the statute in question did (not to say now does, in some islands) of West Indian law. It was, on the contrary, acknowledged to be a detestable violation of all law; which none of the parties concerned ever dared to defend; but all of them were anxious to disclaim. But, if it could even be proved, as I believe it cannot, that the statute in question, as enacted in any one of the West Indian islands, had regularly received the Royal Confirmation, would it not remain to be solemnly argued, Whether even that high authority could legalize a statute so utterly repugnant to the laws of England, and indeed to all laws human and divine? How far that statute is agreeable to the Colonial Charters, has been signified by Mr. Steele, in his judicial Charge to the Grand Jury of Barbadoes.—I believe, it is commonly held that, if the Royal Assent to any colonial statute, is not expressly given within three years after it has been enacted, and regularly transmitted to the Secretary of State, such statute derives a practical equivalent to the Royal Assent, from the principle of silence giving consent. This principle may perhaps be followed safely enough, in ordinary cases; but it can hardly be urged that the *silence*, probably of hurry or forgetfulness,

ness, is a sufficient *expression* of the Royal Assent to statutes which involve the most important interests, and sport with the very *lives* of a large body of people in the allegiance of the British Crown, and entitled to its protection.

That protection, at least, could not be denied to the "Christian servants," many of whom used to be "actually kidnapped in England, especially about Bristol," and also "in Scotland, in or near Glasgow\*;" and whose case, as well as that of "*other Slaves*," is humanely included in the above Royal Instructions;—the Government thereby plainly intimating its suspicions of what was really the truth, that "*inhuman severity*" was exercised towards *both kinds* of Slaves, the white and the black. There are indeed, few or no indentured servants now in the West Indies; but the general treatment of the white apprentices and hired book-keepers and Negro-drivers on sugar estates would, as I apprehend, still admit of very considerable improvement. In my time, the white underlings in general, used to be stinted in their diet, and otherwise ill treated; and their morals were often ruined by intercourse with the black females, and by conniving at the thefts of the

\* See Long, vol. 2. p. 289; Hall's edition of the Laws of Barbadoes, clause 2 of No. 30, passed in 1661, and confirmed by No. 209 in the year 1755; Encyclop. Brit. article *Jefferies*.—Bristol, or Brichstow, as it is called by Gerald Barry (*Cambrensis*) has been the seat of the Slave-trade for many ages. The merchants of that city dealt largely in the persons of their own countrymen, before they made Africa the scene of their speculations.—As for the kidnapped Scotch, Mr. Long says that, on their arrival in Jamaica, "they used to be ranged in a line, like new Negroes, for the planters to pick and chuse."

watchmen and other head Negroes, in order to get victuals\*.

Indeed it is not too much to say that, in the West Indies, as in every other land of Slavery, the whole animal and rational creation of God, "groans, being burdened." Stripes, and chains, and dungeons, usurp, in a great measure, the place of wages and rewards, and of every natural and rational motive to exertion; so that there is a great deal of *drudgery*, but little *industry*. The cruelty of the Slave-laws (and the best of them are cruel) is but little mollified by the lenity of custom, and the liberality of opinion. The ancient and admirable principles of English jurisprudence, which were established in what we call the dark ages, were neglected by the "legislatures of the islands, who resorted to the English villeinage laws, from whence they undoubtedly transferred all" (read a *part only*) "of that severity which characterizes them†." Nor in our colonies, have the maxims of Christianity, of which the old English law maxims are such noble transcripts, been permitted *as yet*, "to heal the broken in heart, to proclaim liberty to the captive, and the opening of the prison-doors to them that are bound‡." Much good,

\* See Letters on Slavery, pp. 42, 47. Even Mr. Turnbull, an *Apologist* for Negro Slavery, "cannot help observing, that it is owing to a cruel indifference, or criminal parsimony, in the diet of the sick, that not a few of the inferior White overseers and tradesmen lose their lives, soon after their arrival in the West Indies." Letters to a Young Planter, p. 43.

† Long, vol 2. p. 493. ‡ I have often quoted this text, which, independently of its religious application, has always appeared to me emphatically expressive of the tender regard of Christianity to the Liberties of mankind. On this subject, see the Spirit of

good, both to the laws and to the customs of the sugar colonies—much benefit to the poor Negroes, would no doubt result from the influence of the higher order of Proprietors, whose education has not been influenced by the prejudices fostered in the white vulgar by difference of complexion. But alas! the majority of these are Absentees, except in Barbadoes, (sometimes called, from its superior improvement, “Little England”) where accordingly, the Negroes, though very much exposed to the depredations and aggressions of the numerous poor whites, are, on the whole, better treated than in any other West Indian colony.

Bad, however, is the best treatment which the Negroes experience in those colonies. How that treatment may be safely and easily improved, is the grand question; and it has been, in a great measure, answered by the *practice* of Mr. Steele, described in his papers, already laid before you. As for the examination, amendment, or repeal of the exceptionable colonial laws, by the authority of Parliament, I have contented myself with stating, at the beginning of this letter, his

of Law. Robertson's Hist. of Cha. V. and his Sermon before the Soc. in Scotl. for propag. Christ. Knowl. in 1755; of which the justly celebrated author gave me a copy, in 1792, saying, “You see, Sir, I have been before-hand with you, in this great work.” Above all, consult the writings of the excellent Granville Sharp, where he traces to the Scriptures, and ably explains and applies the following among other venerable maxims of English law: *Lex injusta*, &c. An unjust law is no law; *Legem terræ*, &c. They who abandon the law of the land, deservedly fix on themselves a perpetual badge of infamy; *Crudelis etiam*, &c. A law must necessarily be accounted cruel, which increases Slavery and diminishes Liberty; *Impius et crudelis*, &c. That man is to be accounted impious and cruel, who does not favour Liberty, &c. &c.

opinion

opinion and that of Mr. Long, without offering any ideas of my own on that delicate and important subject.

I am, &c.

W. D.

## LETTER XII.

### *On the Religious Instruction of the Slaves.*

Mr. Steele and Editor agree that Slaves cannot be instructed in Christianity, till bad laws repealed.—Colonial laws for instructing them, “dust for the eyes of the people of Britain.”—Savages “must be civilized before they can be christianized.”—First Missionaries should be sober, religious husbandmen and mechanics—like those sent among N. American Indians, by Quakers.—W. Indian Negroes not savages—but sensible of their ignorance, and desirous of instruction.—“Christian no’ made for Neger”—“‘case Neger can’t proof not-n’gainst White man.”—Moravians reclaim ten Negroes in Danish islands for one in British, and why.—Danish Government takes care of estates of cruel and thoughtless Planters—Dutch Government does the same.—Danish Planters encourage Negroes to attend Moravians.—Danish Government’s high estimation of Christian Slaves.

DEAR SIR,

ON the “conversion of the Negroes to the Christian religion,” recommended in the Royal Instruction inserted in my last, it is still my firm belief, that “till the evidence of Negroes against Whites shall be allowed some degree of force, all the laws which the wisdom of man can devise, will be found incompetent to protect them; and that, till they shall be effectually protected, every plan calculated materially to improve their condition and their minds, will be found inadequate to its end.” Since this opinion was laid before the public,

it has been corroborated by that of Mr. Steele, who says (p. 158, above) that "Before any kind of religious or moral education can be offered to the Negroes, to any effectual good end, those immoral and impolitic laws which give a legal cover and encouragement\* to the most atrocious crimes that white people may commit, must be abrogated."

Well; some of the most obnoxious of those laws have been abrogated in several of the islands, above twenty years ago. They have been superseded by new laws enjoining the instruction of the Negroes in Christianity, and it must be owned that the colonial legislatures have done every thing (but *one*) which depended upon the *making* of laws to effect that great end. Nor has the late Bishop of London been wanting in his duty to this part of his pastoral charge. He has repeatedly enjoined the clergy, and intreated the colonial legislatures to realize the zeal they have professed for instructing the Slaves, and in one or two of the islands, with some little appearance of success†. But, in a certain

\* Sometimes this encouragement is *direct and explicit*. For example: by the 3d clause of No. 164 (Hall's edit) of the Laws of Barbadoes, passed in 1733, *any white person may take away from a Negro, goods of what nature or quality soever (including sugar-canes, sugar, melasses, corn, or grain of any kind, the very articles on which the poor people subsist!!) and carry them before a magistrate, &c.* The numerous white robbers very exactly execute this law, without troubling their Worshipps about the matter, or so much as knowing that *robbery is a legal act!*

† See P. C. Rep. pp. 351, 43; and more particularly the worthy Prelate's Letters of Apr 2, 1788, and Jan. 1, 1808. This last, which is addressed to the Legislatures, &c, of the Islands, does the Bishop great credit on the whole; though exceptionable in some

certain other island, his admonitions seem to have produced no effect, or worse than none. For some symptoms have appeared of indisposition, not to call it opposition, to the instruction of the Slaves. The fear of giving offence forbids me to say more. But something like this conduct was anticipated, in a good-natured way, by a planter residing in the island alluded to, when its famous converting and protecting law was enacted. "The clause," he says, "respecting the conversion and baptism of Slaves, is *dust for the eyes of the people of Britain*. It puts me in mind of what occurred on board of a coasting vessel which was blown off into the ocean. The master and mate, not knowing how to navigate a ship at a distance from land, the sailors became greatly alarmed. 'I wish,' said the master to his mate, 'our poor wives knew where we are.'—'I wish,' said one of the seamen, 'we ourselves knew where we are.'—I apprehend there is *something* requisite, previous to *masters, mistresses, and overseers, instructing the Slaves in the Christian religion*."

For my own part, I have always held, that it is vain to expect that any thing effectual can be done for the instruction of the Slaves, till something effectual shall be done for their protection. Their natural wants too must be supplied, before they can be well expected properly to feel their mental, or spiritual, wants. They must have some ease as animals, before their in-

some of its parts. Indeed I must protest against the doctrines laid down, on the 24th and 25th pages; and, if this were the proper place, I would endeavour to overthrow them;—preserving, however, all the respect which is justly due to the office and the memory of Bishop Porteus.

tellects

telleets can be cultivated; and their intellects must be, in some degree, cultivated before they can become Christians. Or to use, with suitable allowance, the words of the Rev. Cotton Mather, "they must be civilized before they can be christianized \*." This is the order of nature and Providence. To invert it, is, to say the least of it, beginning at the wrong end. It was the order too, in which Christianity was first propagated : at least, I recollect no instance in which that best blessing of Heaven was offered to mere idle, vagabond savages. All the nations to whom the apostles preached, were advanced in civilization—some of them so far advanced, that the greatest merit of the moderns is to emulate their achievements in the fine arts, and even in the abstract sciences, as far as they had then been carried. It is worthy of remark, that St. Paul remained not long with the hospitable, though barbarous people in the *little southern island* of Melita † ; but hastened, when the winter was over, to polished and imperial Rome. The same great apostle worked as well as preached ;—worked hard at a humble, mechanical employment. This is not brought to prove that all preachers, or even all missionaries, ought to be mechanics. But this great example does appear to recom-

\* See also a little pamphlet intitled the Case of Caribbs of St. Vincent, p. 20 ; and which is ascribed to the Rev. Dr. Coke.

† The modern Malta. Read the 28th chap. of the Acts. A certain philosophist says, with a sneer, that there are no vipers now in that island. Did he recollect that there are no wolves now in the British Isles ; and that the Caledonian wild boar is not to be found in modern Scotland ? Did he not know that cultivation has banished the rattle-snake from many districts of North America ? And why not the viper from Malta ?

mend,



mend, as the *first* missionaries to instruct *mere savages*, pious and industrious husbandmen and artisans, to introduce among them the arts essential to civilized life. Not a word, in my humble opinion, should be said to them about religion \* ; except in answer to their own inquiries, which would come of course. Thus, they would be instructed in the only way in which untutored tribes can receive instruction. The silent insinuation of good examples and useful arts, would gradually influence their conduct, and prepare their minds for the reception of moral and religious truth. In short, religion would follow, for it evidently cannot precede, civilization.

This plan has been actually reduced to practice, and with some prospect of success, by the Quakers, among certain tribes of Indians in North America ; —I do not say in consequence of any hints of mine : but it is certain that I have been, for many years, recommending this plan to men of liberal minds ; and such are the few Quakers with whom I have the pleasure to be acquainted. But there are men, and well meaning men, whose ideas are too contracted to admit of free discussion on the subject of religion. If one do not swallow implicitly every individual dogma of their Protestant Popery, their zeal takes fire, and

\* The continual *boring* of young people with religion, has very bad effects on some dispositions. I could name a certain most respectable national church, whose worthy ministers formerly erred so much in this particular, that their own sons, when once they escaped from the discipline of their paternal task-masters, were peculiarly apt to exemplify the old Monkish rhyme,

*Pastorum Nati raro solent esse beati.*

the

the conversation ends with an insinuation, or perhaps a direct charge, of *infidelity*!!

But I am insensibly wandering from my subject, the instruction of the Field-negroes in the British Sugar islands; who are by no means idle, wandering savages. Their minds, no doubt, have been greatly depressed, and their character, in various respects, debased by Slavery. But, allowing for this circumstance, they are wonderfully acute, well disposed, and desirous of improvement. They already speak our language, practise our mechanical arts, highly prize our privileges, and want nothing but protection from oppression and arbitrary violence, to induce them to embrace our religion. But without something like validity of testimony, protection and conversion (or more properly instruction) will be found impossible. "I am old man," says one who *felt* this to be true, "and being I am a driver, am not put to common labour; but Christian no' made for Neger in this country"—"For when I sell fowl or pig to white man, I can't make him pay me; because *Neger can't proof not'n 'gainst white man*; and if white man goes and tells Justice, that I am a impudent, lying rogue, for say he owe me money, Justice will make constable whip me. Or white man may beat me, cut me, or *kill me*, before all so many black men, and *no law for save black man, or punish white man for murder black man.*"

The progress of the Moravian missionaries, so justly and liberally commended by the late Bishop Porteus\*, seems too well to exemplify these statements. Notwith-

\* See the Bishop's Letter to the Legislatures, &c. of the W. Indian Islands, 1808, p. 9.

standing the fondness of the Negroes for Baptism and Christian burial, which however their worthy teachers consider as something more than mere external badges of distinction, their Black and Mulatto hearers, in 1787, the fifty-fifth year of their labours, amounted only to 5,545, in all the British sugar islands. This trifling number is little more than one per cent. of the whole black population ; and forms not, perhaps, ten per cent. even of the principal people, including the domestics, tradesmen, and free Negroes. As for the great body of the Slaves, the Field-negroes, "*they cannot hearken unto Moses for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage*"—a passage admirably descriptive of the soul-killing depression of Slavery, and which can be well understood by those *only* who, with a sympathizing eye, have "looked on their burthens\*."—In the same year (1787) the Moravians had no fewer than 10,000 hearers in the Danish islands of St. Thomas and St. John ; being, I believe, about ten per cent. of the whole black population of those islands, or about ten times the proportion of their followers in the British islands. But then it must be observed, that the Danish Negroes derived considerable protection from the nature of their government. For, with all its faults, an arbitrary government, when well administered, is a powerful check on the abuse of authority in private individuals. It suffers them not to exceed the bounds of humanity and moderation, but, as Mr. Long observes, "controuls the Masters of Slaves themselves, from the highest to the lowest." The Danish Governors have authority even to divest cruel and un-

\* See Exod. ii. 11, and vi. 9.

thinking planters of the management of their own estates, and to commit them to the care of persons of prudence and humanity; and this effectual method of protecting the Slaves, has been actually enforced in several instances \*. The Danish planters too, like a few worthy individuals in our own islands, encourage their Slaves to attend the meetings of the Moravians. The effects of this beneficent and politic conduct, have been so apparent, in the improved morals and behaviour of the Slaves, that the Danish colonial governments have more than once declared that “*the baptized Negroes are a greater security to them than their forts* †.”

I am, &c.

W. D.

\* See P. C. Report, p. 463; Objections, &c. with Answers, p. 66. The Dutch in Demerary, &c. sometimes have recourse to the same vigorous measure. Mr. Bolingbroke mentions an instance of a brutal Dutchman, possessed of 300 or 400 Negroes, being thus ejected from his property, which was put under curators for his behoof. He gives instances also of planters being heavily fined, even as high as 1250*l.* sterling for ill treating and starving their Slaves. Voyage to Demerary, p. 336.

† View of the Missions, &c. by the Church of the Brethren.

### LETTER XIII.

#### *On the Defence of the Sugar Colonies.*

Slave-system renders W. Indies “weak and feeble”—partly because ignorant, prejudiced, poor whites tyrannize over the Slaves, and influence the colonial legislatures—“If secured from barbarity,” Jamaica Negroes would “offer themselves willingly” to defend Whites.—Negroes of Barbadoes, both free and Slaves, well disposed—have been partly armed to defend the island—and always behaved well, even on trying occasions.—Hence deserve to be attached to the soil, and legally protected—Our islands

Islands now very easily alarmed and subdued.—Improved Slave-system would put them out of danger.—St. Domingo revolution has been alarming, but may be beneficial—meanwhile awfully menaces Slave-colonies—*Res nolunt malè administrari!*—President Jefferson's opinion of N. American Slave-system.

DEAR SIR,

THE comparative security which, as observed at the end of the last letter, the baptized Negroes gave to the Danish sugar islands, naturally reminds us of the defence of our own; which, notwithstanding their population, their natural strength, and a climate peculiarly unfavourable to military operations, are rendered, by the Slave-system, “the most vulnerable part of the British empire\*.”

“*Weak and feeble*,” say the Assembly of Jamaica, in one of their petitions to the Throne†;—“weak and feeble, as this colony is, from the very small number of white inhabitants, and the incumbrance of more than 200,000 Slaves, &c. — What! nine-tenths—for that is about the proportion of the Slaves to the whole population of Jamaica—nine-tenths of the inhabitants of a country, solemnly represented, by the popular branch of its legislature, as an “incumbrance,” which renders it “weak and feeble!” Is not this a melancholy confession that there is “something rotten in the state of Denmark,” something *fundamentally* and dangerously wrong in its constitution and government? The Presbyterians in the North were, for a

\* These are the words of the late Mr. Irving, the able Inspector General of the Customs. See Abridg. Evid. before H. of Commons, No. 4. p. 152.

† See Parliamentary Register for 1774 and 1775, p. 308.

long period, a woful incumbrance to the Stuarts. But the happy revolution in 1688, converted those same Presbyterians, who had been erroneously represented as enemies to monarchy, into a tower of strength to the British Government. And, not to mention any *other* description of people, would not liberal and healing measures, wisely adapted to the case, produce the like happy change in the dispositions of the Negroes? The true seat of government is in the *affections* of the governed; and these never will or *can* be gained by the barbarous policy of the Slave system, and the more barbarous practices which it authorizes.

Having mentioned the Assembly, or popular branch of the legislature of Jamaica, in a way which may be thought to border on levity, it may be proper, to add a few words of explanation which candour and justice seem to demand of me. It is but fair to observe, that the Assemblies of the islands number among their members some very worthy and enlightened men. But it must also be owned, that favour to the Negro race is not very likely to recommend them to the support of the majority of their constituents. The qualifications of the electors are so pitifully low \* as to admit in that quality (at least in Barbadoes) a rabble of poor, ignorant, incorrigible white men, nursed up in all the deplorable, not to call them savage and brutal, prejudices of the Slave-system. The favourite candidates

\* In Jamaica and Barbadoes, the qualification to vote for an Assembly-man, for the respective parishes, is a freehold of 10*l.* curr. or about 7*l.* sterl. a year; that is, hardly a fourth part of the wages and maintenance of the meanest white underling on a sugar plantation!

of those voters, are men who support what they, with incredible absurdity, call their "constitutional rights;" that is, their *rights* of doing all manner of *wrongs* to the unprotected Negro race; for from these very voters, the Negroes and Mulattoes, both the Slaves and those called Free, daily suffer the most atrocious injuries. The Assembly of Barbadoes is elected annually, or oftener, if the Governor think fit to dissolve it within the year. The duration of the Jamaica Assembly depends on the will of the Governor who, however, has been known to dissolve it several times, in the same year\*. Hence the members, who in general are fully as desirous of retaining their seats as those of the British House of Commons, are kept dependent on the popular opinion (such as it is) and the parish unhappily *visited* by a contested election, is kept, sometimes for a series of years, in an uproar of clamour and absurdity, incompatible with industry, good neighbourhood, and personal safety. The unlucky Member who should dare to propose or to support any measure understood to favour the Negroes, or to trench on the *unbounded and absolute supremacy* of all white men over all black and tawny men, would be sure to lose his seat in a few weeks or months. And thus the very *class* of men, from whose injustice, rapacity, and brutality, the laws *ought* to protect the unhappy Negroes and people of colour, may themselves be said to make the laws, or to controul or powerfully influence, those who do! White men are held both by the laws, and by the general opinion, to be the only *legitimate* defenders of their country; though it may be fairly ques-

\* Long, vol. 1. p. 57.

tioned whether, by perpetually harassing and alienating the far more numerous, strong and hardy Negro race, the poor Whites do not weaken their country more than they strengthen it, by any exertions which can be expected from such men, in the day of trial. They do not indeed appear to want personal courage, or loyalty; but we may say with certainty, that, from their slender interest in the soil, many of them as poor militia-tenants, they have not nearly so much to lose by defeat, as a well treated and effectually protected Body of Slaves; who would sooner die than be deprived of such privileges!

The above facts, relative to the Representative Bodies of Jamaica and Barbadoes, our two principal islands, and which may be applied more or less to them all, are mentioned not as plenary apologies for all the acts of the colonial Assemblies, but as part of a fair statement of important facts which have not been noticed, as far as I know, by any preceding writer on West Indian affairs.—Mr. Long, as if to show what he thought of the Jamaica Assembly approaching the Throne with a complaint which they had it very much in their own power to redress, showed them in the same year (1774) the true way of getting rid of the “incumbrance” which rendered their island “weak and feeble.”

That historian, who certainly knew the state and interests of Jamaica, at least as well as any member of its legislature, may be said to adopt, in the first place, Mr. Burke's “Proposal for a sort of Enfranchisement of Mulattoes and Negroes;” in which he is followed  
by



by Mr. Edwards\*. He then proceeds thus: "Let the Gentlemen of Jamaica boldly pursue every measure which will tend to multiply their people, or to strengthen their country against foreign enemies. Let them, in order to prevent domestic ones, *conciliate the attachment of their Negroes, by protection and encouragement, rather than seek to exact an involuntary obedience by austerity and terror.*"—"Bodily strength, and their adaptation to the climate, would enable them to pass from the lowest to the highest stations, and give the law to their Masters, if they were willing unanimously to attempt it!! But when those who fill the lowest rank, are used with equity and benevolence, so far from becoming dreadful, by flocking together in order to trample upon us, they comply with whatever we require of them, *they offer themselves willingly to be our defenders*, and are themselves the instruments to restrain one another within the bounds of their allotted condition."—"The Slaves of the Athenians had an action against their owners for acts of outrage and ill usage. If the fact was proved, the Owner was obliged to sell his Slave who, while the process depended, might retire into an asylum appointed to secure him from all intermediate violence."

This resembles the process, under the ancient English writ, *De libertate probanda*; pending which the villein laying claim to freedom, was protected from the vexation of the suitor who challenged him.

"The Athenian Slaves were authorized to purchase

\* Europ. Settl. part 6, ch. 12; Long, vol. 2: p. 333. 503; Edwards, vol. 2. p. 25.—But that plan is liable to very weighty objections; for which there is not room here.

their

their freedom, in despite of their owners, whenever they had amassed the sum which the law had fixed for that purpose."

This last excellent regulation has been adopted by the Spaniards; whose Slave-laws (whatever *we* may think) as well as those of the Portuguese, are, in many respects, worthy of *British imitation*. Mr. Long goes on to show that, "*if the Slaves were secured, by rational provisions, from violence and barbarity, or permitted to redeem themselves from perpetuity of servitude, with the fair and honest earnings of their private industry, &c. they would contribute largely not to the strength alone, but to the prosperity of Jamaica.*"

Such is the counsel of Mr. Long—and *he* cannot be suspected of partiality to the Negroes—who, you well know, was by far the most formidable adversary with whom *we* had to contend, in vindicating the proper human nature of that unfortunate race; a doctrine which they themselves have since been forced, by folly and tyranny, to establish by certain *iron* arguments which are far more cogent, with many men of the world, than any drawn from physiology, or moral philosophy.

Mr. Long's advice may be yet more safely followed in Barbadoes than in Jamaica. The great mass of the Barbadian Slaves have been born in the colony, for about ten generations; and the proportion of Whites is far greater than in Jamaica or any other British, or probably European, sugar colony. From these and other causes elsewhere stated, and which, as the general effect has never been questioned, need not be here repeated, the Slaves are, in general, better treated in Barbadoes than in any of our other sugar colonies. No  
well

*well disposed* white person has any thing to fear from the Negroes in that island. Disabled as I was, I thought nothing of walking (as it is not every horse that I can ride) eight or ten miles, in the cool of the evening, alone and unarmed, and never was once molested by a Negro; though they are always to be met with on the roads. I have been told the same thing, by gentlemen who had passed long lives in the island. The only danger is, that of being mistaken in the dark, for some white robber, runaway-catcher, or other oppressor \*. These gentry never go out at nights, without being well armed, or followed by a fierce dog; and no doubt have some reason to call the Negroes vindictive. Conscious guilt tells them what they deserve! It is plain, however, that they very rarely experience the effects of the *lex talionis*. I recollect only two violent murders of whites by blacks, during my residence of above thirteen years; and the poisoning of a white infant, by its black female keeper, who disliked her office. A white Negro-hunter also, in my neighbourhood, got a severe beating from a runaway, who immediately went home to his manager; when the latter not only forgave him, but threatened the white man with another beating for meddling, unasked, with his Negro. He might however be really in fear for the Slave's life, or right hand. But the white man, conscious of his own

\* Some years before I arrived in Barbadoes, an innocent white man was killed in a dark passage in Bridgetown, by a Negro who mistook him for the town "jumper," or public flogger,—a character despised by all decent white people, and detested by the Negroes. I was told that, at his execution, he expressed great regret at having undesignedly killed an innocent man; but no regret at all for his intention to destroy a cruel tyrant.

worth.

worthlessness, and that he was the aggressor, let the matter drop. A friend of mine who lived about twenty years in St. Kitt's, could remember no case of the murder of a white person by a black, and but one of assault; that of a Negro striking a white sailor, for which the culprit suffered the pains of the law, in the loss of his right hand! In both islands, there cannot be so few as 100,000 Negroes, and their coloured descendants; so that perhaps, all Europe might be challenged to produce such another instance of the infrequency of murder.

The general confidence which subsists between the whites and blacks in Barbadoes, is strongly, though irregularly and illegally, exemplified in the great crowds of Negroes and Mulattoes who collect to dance (chiefly, it is to be regretted, on Sundays) by day and by night, especially near the towns, with little or no interruption; unless their noise happen to disturb the immediate neighbourhood.

Another, and a very troublesome example of this confidence, is seen in the total neglect of police in the towns. Bridgetown is thought to contain 10,000 or 11,000 blacks and their descendants, and only about 3000 whites. Speightstown may contain in all, from 3000 to 4000 people. Oistin's and the Hole are mere villages; but those parts of the island which abound with small proprietors, have the appearance of a continued village. Not a regular soldier had been seen in Barbadoes for many years preceding Dec. 1778; and the militia had become totally inefficient. Yet the nocturnal dancing, fiddling, drumming and drunken quarrels of the town Negroes, not to mention their more  
silent

silent depredations, caused not the slightest surmise of any improper combinations. During the American war, considerable Bodies of Slaves were trusted with pikes and cutlasses (but not with fire-arms) for the defence of Barbadoes. The free Negroes and Mulattoes had fire-arms, and were well clothed and accoutred, at their own expence. Excepting indeed the Governor's life-guard, and the town volunteers, they made a far better appearance, and were far better disciplined (being much more susceptible of discipline) than any white corps in the island; and I remember that brave and worthy veteran, General Tottenham, offending the white militia by expressing his preference of the free people of colour. *The unpitied throbs of my maimed limb give me continual cause to remember* how dearly I have paid for the liberty of speaking out on this subject;—a liberty, however, which I will not abuse. But I may defy any man to produce a single instance of either Slaves or free Negroes manifesting the least sign of insubordination. On the contrary, a spirit of attachment to their country, and of loyalty to “Grandy Massa,” combined with a hearty contempt of the French, animated the Blacks and Mulattoes, both Slaves and Free, as well as the Whites, during the whole of the American war; so peculiarly trying to Barbadoes, before it taught the planters to depend for their daily bread, more on their own soil, than on uncertain, and half-rotten American supplies. Above all, the great hurricane of 1780, put the colony entirely in the power of the Negroes. The arms, ammunition and provisions were destroyed, all artificial distinctions levelled in the dust, and the government itself  
for

for some time dissolved, or laid entirely at the mercy of the black majority. Yet amidst this awful scene of desolation, the Negroes remained quietly on the wrecks of the estates; even where their proprietors, or managers, were numbered among the dead. More alarm indeed, was excited by about 1000 surviving prisoners of war who had scrambled from among the ruins of the gaols, than by the whole body of the Slaves; though the prisoners also behaved very well. On these strong grounds, I predicted, above 25 years ago, that the peace of Barbadoes would not be in any respect endangered by the Abolition of the Slave-trade; and, *if* any future measures shall be wisely suited to obviate certain exigencies which need not be named, but which, from the awfully precarious state of things in the West Indies, are become but too probable, the same prediction may be extended to an indefinite period.

Now, will any man say, that the conduct which the Negroes manifested on such trying occasions, does not recommend them to the humble boon of a *legal* attachment to a soil, to which they show so much *natural* attachment? Will any man, in short, pretend that men so laudably partial to their Sovereign and to their native island, ought to be for ever deprived of protection from the lawless violence not only of their immediate rulers, but of *any* and *every* white vagabond who may choose, in the absence of other whites, to assault, rob, or murder them, or to violate their women?—crimes which are every day perpetrated on the Negro race, with absolute impunity!

*The very existence of our sugar colonies, now depends on a timely amendment of the Slave-system!!*

Our

Our alarms for those colonies, on the escape of every paltry fleet from Brest or Rochefort, demonstrate our more than paralytic weakness in that quarter. If it should skulk a few weeks among the islands, their agriculture is in a manner suspended, and the white inhabitants are thrown into a panic scarcely exceeded by the terrors of the Coromantin drum. The appearance of seven top-sail vessels used to be a legal ground for sounding an alarm in Barbadoes, and putting the whole island in motion. But were a conciliatory Slave-system, adopted, seven of the largest ships of war would excite no more alarm than so many Nantucket whalers, and the Coromantin drum than the pacific banjay \*. In my time, all our eleven islands, except Barbadoes, Jamaica and Antigua, fell a comparatively easy prey to the enemy. But were the Slaves tolerably instructed and protected—had they but such a humble portion of privilege and property to fight for, as Mr. Steele's plan would secure to them, no distant part of the British dominions would be half so secure from invasion.

Jamaica probably contains about 350,000 people, in all. A fourth are men fit for arms; and, if the Slaves could be trusted, one-tenth might be trained; so that Jamaica might furnish 35,000 men in ordinary times, or, if threatened with invasion, double this number†. Barbadoes out of its 100,000 souls, on little more than as many acres, might easily have 12 or 15,000 men always

\* The *Cromanty* drum is a very animating instrument. Though strictly prohibited by law, I have once or twice heard it beaten, for a short time, in Barbadoes. The banjay is a rude kind of guitar.

† See Long, vol. 1. pp. 135, 140, 377.

trained

trained to arms, or, in case of serious alarm, might in a few hours send from 20 to 25,000 men to the forts, batteries and entrenchments, or about 1000 men for every mile of the accessible part of its coast; most of which is impregnable by nature. The same sort of calculation would apply more or less to all the other islands. Now if, at the same time, *proper attention were paid to the raising of provisions on the islands*, it is very evident that no advantage which an enemy could derive from possessing them, could compensate the enormous expence of the armaments which, on our suppositions, would be necessary to reduce them. In other words, the sugar islands would cease to be the "most vulnerable part of the British empire." Few or no land forces would be necessary for their defence, and no ships of war, but convoys for the trade; and thus both the islands and the mother-country would be, in a great measure, released from alarm, and from a heavy load of expence.

The Negroes and *gens de couleur* of St. Domingo have shown what they can do in a cause which they *think* their own—no matter whether wisely or not; for error is truth to those who believe it. After that noble colony had been plunged, by revolutionary phrensy, into those horrors which are perpetually suspended by a hair over every land of slavery—we took possession of it! Any man, not excepting your humble servant, informed about the climate, and extent, and strength, and natural resources of St. Domingo, could foresee, that, if the blacks could be but kept together, they might very easily baffle the finest European army ever sent to perish in the West Indies. The hardy blacks,



blacks, with their fig-leaf aprons, had only to retire to the mountains, with their provisions and live stock, to which they could materially add by planting, shooting wild cattle, &c. There they might wait till the rains set in, and then occasionally beat up their enemy's quarters, in the dark and rainy nights. Such operations would, of course, soon make the invaders very quiet; almost without shedding a drop of their blood. Exposure to the heats, rains and damps of a climate in which Europeans never did, and never *can* stand military duty, would destroy them as effectually as the sword. And this, in truth, was the upshot of what has been very justly called our "long, hopeless, costly and murderous war against climate and pestilence in St. Domingo\*." But St. Domingo will probably emerge from a sea of blood, into some sort of regular government; and, as has been shown by an able writer †, is likely to become a valuable commercial ally to any nation which may have the wisdom to cultivate the connection.

We cannot even hint at the crowd of ideas which here bursts in upon the mind. In ordinary times, the affairs of the sugar islands might alone furnish ample employment for reflection. But their new and unexpected relation to St. Domingo, has no parallel in modern history. But what are the affairs of the sugar islands compared with the great events which are now passing on the theatre of the world; and of which no human sagacity can foresee the issue; though the consequences of the first movements were, to my know-

\* See Edinburgh Review, for July 1809, p. 463.

† Mr. Stephen, in one of his valuable pieces.

ledge, both foreseen and foretold, without any pretension to the spirit of prophecy?—We have seen all Christendom convulsed, and kingdoms to which St. Domingo itself, though once the greatest sugar-colony in the world, would hardly make a middling province, prostrated in the dust, or nodding to their fall.—Their blind confidence (not unlike that of the West Indians) in the *force* of government, rather than the *affections* of the governed, has evidently contributed to their ruin. We have *accordingly* seen the enemy of our peace humbling or destroying them, with a single blow, and issuing his despotic mandates from most of the great capitals of Europe. We have seen Britain herself half alarmed for her independence; and suppose (for what may we not suppose in times like these?) that the emergencies of this awful struggle, should render it inconvenient for her to protect her colonies, as was actually the case during the American war, and that the new black republic, or whatever else it may become, should be seized with the phrensy of conquest,—is there a being in human shape so deplorably crippled in his intellects, as to require an anticipated description of the consequences?

Some affect to read the destiny of the islands in their vicinity to the American states; several of which practising, and all of them tolerating Slavery themselves, may the more quietly endure it in their dependencies. This, it may be hoped, is a distant event; but supposing it should take place in our own times, would it alter the case to the islands themselves? By no means: for would not *such* a transfer of dominion, probably be attended, as in the case of St. Domingo, with an interval

terval of trembling imbecility, an awful *interregnum* of terror, the prelude to a similar catastrophe?

In every view of this subject, the necessity of adopting new measures, suited to the new circumstances of our islands, is undeniable. The present Slave-system is not made for stability; nor indeed can it be safely continued for a single day, without some material modifications, of the nature of those put in practice by Mr. Steele. Absolute Slavery and tolerable security are moral and political contradictions; and idiocy alone will expect contradictions to be reconciled, in order to gratify absurdity. A system which never was rationally defensible, on *any* grounds of morality, religion, or policy, is now become dangerously incompatible with the new and portentous state of things. "The existence of a black power" in the vicinity of an important but "weak and feeble" British island, standing on a mine of explosive materials, may well make those whose language we quote "shrink with horror \*." "'Tis *conscience* that makes cowards of us all." If a well informed, impartial conscience accuse us not, we have little to fear from any "*black power*," in this world, or the next †. But if conscience, seared by the practice of Slavery, hath lost her feeling and her sway, we may at least gather from the awful experience of others, that "*Res nolunt malè administrari*:" violated "nature must and will have its course ‡."

"With what execration," says Mr. Jefferson, "shall that statesman be loaded, who suffers a part of the

\* Petition of the W. India Plant. and Merch. to H. of Lords, 1807.

† See Sir Matthew Hale's Contemplations, p. 95.

‡ Sir J. Child on Trade, p. 26.

citizens to trample on the rights of the rest? And can the liberties of a nation be thought secure, when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are the gift of God, and that they are not to be violated but with his wrath? Indeed, I tremble for my country, when I reflect that God is just;—and, we have seen, that his justice sleeps not for ever. Considering numbers, nature, and natural means only, an exchange of situations is *now* to be ranked among those events which are becoming daily more imminent; and it may become real by supernatural interference. *The ALMIGHTY has no attribute which can take sides with us in such a conjuncture* \*.

To men of little reflection, who happily know nothing of this subject, but from reading or hearsay, this language of Mr. Jefferson may sound like declamation; and declaimers are apt to run into exaggeration. Yet it would be difficult to conjecture what motive he could have to exaggerate the disgrace of his native country, to which he is said to have more than a “laudable partiality.” But he need be under no apprehension of such a charge, from those who have derived their knowledge of modern Slavery from their own observation; and have had firmness enough to resist the influence of example, and the more powerful illusions of interest, ill understood. I am, &c.

W. D.\*

\* A little altered and softened, from p 173 of the Notes on Virginia, by Mr. Jefferson, late President of the American Congress.

## LETTER XIV.

*Comparative Importance, &c. of the Sugar Colonies.*

Dr. Campbell and Mr. Edwards, the only writers who deny Barbadoes to be the Mother-colony of the British W. Indies—proved to be mistaken.—That island succoured the infancy of all the rest.—Supplies with provisions, fleet, army, hospitals, and its own crowded population—Hence its *commercial* exports reduced.—Mr. Edwards wrong in asserting that Barbadoes has declined more than any *other* island—though it has declined, compared with its former *self*.—From hurricane, its sugar crop decreases, its cotton increases.—In proportion to the Slaves, its crops exceeded in value those of Jamaica, by above 4 per cent.—and it employs 28 per cent. more shipping than Jamaica, and why.

DEAR SIR,

IN drawing up a note on Mr. Steele's text, respecting the comparative seniority of the sugar colonies, I have been insensibly led into a kind of historical dissertation, which I take the liberty to submit to you ;—not without the hope that you will find it worth the reading. The concluding statement, in particular, will be surprising to most people, and interesting to many.

Barbadoes, you know, was first occupied by the English in 1624 ; about two years before they and the French took joint possession of St. Christophers\*. The only writers I know of, who deny the former island to be our oldest sugar colony, are Dr. Campbell †, and

\* Oldmixon, vol. 2. p. 3 ; Frere, p. 4.

† Considerations on the Sugar Trade, p. 8. Dr. C. was both learned and ingenious ; but wrote too much to be always very accurate. See a ludicrous mistake of his corrected in Mr. Neill's late interesting Tour through Orkney and Shetland, p. 209.

Mr.

Mr. Edwards, on his authority \*. The Doctor, for some reason with which he has not favoured the public, gives that honour to Surinam, which he asserts contained 60,000 inhabitants, two-thirds of them whites, when it was ceded by us to the Dutch in 1667, at the treaty of Breda. Mr. Burke, however, says that "Surinam was of no great value to us†;" and Oldmixon records that the whole English colony, Whites and Negroes, who in consequence of the cession of Surinam, or rather its commutation for New York, were removed to Jamaica, amounted only to 1200‡. Captain Stedman states the same fact, and several more pertaining to the early history of that part of Guiana. He says, that in 1634, a Dutchman "discovered" about sixty English planting tobacco on the banks of the Surinam. He adds, that in the year 1665, that river was adorned with above forty sugar plantations; and that the first introduction of the sugar-cane was disputed by the French and the Portuguese; the English, though then masters of the colony, appearing to have taken no part in the controversy §. But that, long before the year 1665, Barbadoes contained above four times forty sugar plantations, will admit of no controversy at all ||. For Ligon informs us that the cane was intro-

\* Edwards, vol. 2. p. 423.

† Account of the European Settlements, &c. vol. 2. p. 48, 179.

‡ Oldmixon, vol. 2. p. 316. See also Long, vol. 1. p. 296.

§ See Stedman's Expedition to Surinam, p. 47.

|| Oldmixon, vol. 2. p. 9, gives a list of about 170 plantations which had been settled in Barbadoes, in Governor Bell's time; that is, between 1641 and 1650, according to Frere, p. 131.

duced about 1640\* ; and he states that ten years afterward, when he left the island, the planters had become so expert in boiling and curing, as to "make white lump sugars;" the population then amounting to 50,000 whites, and twice as many blacks†. Mr. Edwards "suspects that this account is much exaggerated‡". But we learn from Hickeringill, whose *second* edition, printed in 1661, is now before me, that "the most barren rocks, even of the Scotland of Barbadoes [then] owned a proprietor; and that the whole island was pestered with a supernumerary glut of inhabitants." And, which is more to our purpose, he intimates that they made their payments in *sugar*, which was so universally cultivated as to have become the common standard of value§ ; as it continued to be for many years afterwards. These authorities appear to invalidate completely Dr. Campbell's gratuitous assertion, that "Surinam was the *first* sugar colony we ever had." But he acknowledges (p. 26) that "Barbadoes is the oldest of our *present* W. Indian sugar colonies."

Yet Mr. Edwards brings this writer's authority to\*

\* According to an essay in the *Caribbeana*, vol. 2. p. 33, "the sugar trade had its first rise from Barbadoes about the year 1626;" but the writer does not cite any authority; and I know of no *printed* authority which can be opposed to that of Ligon, in this case.

† Ligon, pp. 43, 46, 85, 86. See also Blome, p. 79. Oldmixon, vol. 2. p. 7, seems to think that Ligon and Sir T. Dalby, are not very consistent in their accounts of the introduction of the sugar-cane. But the very passages he quotes show the contrary.

‡ Edwards, vol. 1. p. 351.

§ Hickeringill's *Jamaica viewed*, pp. 16, 17. See also Oldmixon, vol. 2. p. 237.

prove

prove that, “ notwithstanding the general opinion ascribes the honour of seniority to Barbadoes, the island of St. Christopher is the eldest of all the British territories in the West Indies ; and, in truth, the *common mother* both of the English and French settlements in the Charaibbean islands.” But, by Mr. E’s own account, this “ common mother” was much to be pitied, during her painful and tedious pregnancy with this discordant brood. For, in this very chapter, he tells us that the poor creature’s bowels were torn, for half a century, with “ internal contention, violence, and bloodshed ;” and he relates a few of the shocking particulars. Indeed, he makes it quite plain, that before the peace of Utrecht, in 1713, when St. Christophers was confirmed to Great Britain, the inhabitants could not be said to enjoy any tolerable security for life or property. Yet Mr. E. does not appear to recollect that his bloody account demonstrates the utter inability of a colony so circumstanced, to act as a mother to her neighbours.—What might be his motive, for endeavouring to detract from the antiquity of Barbadoes, does not appear. But he goes so nearly to work as to “ show” (that is, to *assert*) “ that the first actual establishment in that island took place the *latter end* of 1624 \*.”

Mr. Steele however, as well as Mr. Long and every other respectable writer, except Dr. C. and Mr. E. allows that Barbadoes is indeed “ *the Mother-colony*†.” Advancing, herself, with a rapidity altogether unparalleled, in our colonial history, she succoured the infancy

\* Edwards, vol. 1. pp. 329, 422 *et seqq.*

† Steele, pp. 68, 139 above ; Long, vol. 2. p. 493. See also *Caribbeana*, vol. 2. p. 33.



of *every* other British colony, within the tropicks \*. Some of them, to my knowledge, she used to assist with fresh provisions, within the last forty years; and, I believe, one or two of them still continue to require her occasional help. During the American war, our troops at St. Lucie, were entirely supplied with live stock and vegetables from Barbadoes †. The ships bound to the other islands generally call there first, to obtain refreshments, and to try the market. I have seen 200 sail of merchant ships, with their convoy, enter Carlisle bay, in one fleet; and have known large fleets of men of war, once as far as 32 ships of the line, besides frigates, at anchor, for a considerable time, in that harbour; which Dr. Pinckard (after Ligon, p. 21) not improperly calls “the busy Thames of the West Indies.” In short, I have heard the late Admiral Barrington, and other excellent officers, speak with gratitude of the important supplies of fresh provisions which our fleets derive from Barbadoes. Considerable quantities are also wanted for the naval and military hospi-

\* Hickinggill, p. 12; Blome, p. 41; Long, vol. 1. pp. 262, 298, 626. Oldmixon, vol. 2. *passim*. Even so early as 1655, Barbadoes furnished 3500 men to the armament which, after failing in an attack on St. Domingo, succeeded in reducing Jamaica. Hickinggill, p. 67; Frere, p. 18. Long, vol. 1. p. 224, says that 4000 foot, and two small troops of 60 horse, were then raised in Barbadoes.

† I have already mentioned the honest zeal and liberality which all ranks and descriptions of the people of Barbadoes displayed, in making a free gift of fresh provisions to our brave, but languishing army at the island above named. See p. 311, above; also Lett. on Slavery, p. 95. The relief generously afforded both by the People and the Legislature of Barbadoes to the inhabitants of St. Vincent, on occasion of the late destructive volcanic eruption, is noticed in the Times newspaper, 13 July, 1812.

tals

tals established there, on this very account; and still greater for the armaments sometimes placed at that commanding windward station, in readiness to defend our own islands, or to attack those of the enemy. Thus not the infancy only, but the very maturity of our other sugar colonies, as well as our naval and military operations, all conspire to diminish the *commercial* produce of Barbadoes. That island has moreover to maintain at least 100,000 people of its own, on about 165 square miles of land, of which only 125 are productive;—a density of population, as before observed, unequalled, perhaps, in any other island in the world, except Malta\*. All the sugar islands depend more than they ought, on imported provisions; but Barbadoes far less than any of them. Accordingly, bad as it is, “the *best* allowance of food to the Slaves, is evidently at Barbadoes†;”—a fact which aptly exemplifies the position of Dr. Anderson, and other political and rural œconomists, that the best peopled countries, *cæteris paribus*, generally enjoy the greatest plenty‡.

What are we to think then, of the vulgar notion, adopted by Mr. Edwards, that “the annual produce of Barbadoes (particularly sugar) has decreased in a

\* See Suppl. to P. C. Report, pp. 31, 35; and p. 308 above.

† Abstr. of Evidence, &c. p. 58, Edinb. edit.

‡ In consequence of the ready market, fish, in great quantity and variety, is caught off Barbadoes. The shoals of flying-fish which, for want of a market, play around some of the other islands, almost unheeded, afford many an excellent meal to the people of that island. They are about the size of middling herrings, but firmer and not so fat. I have seen them, in the crop season, sold at 10 a penny; a sufficient dinner for three men. But more commonly they are at 5 or 6 for a penny.—*Elecætus volitans*, LINN.

much greater proportion, than in any other of the West Indian colonies?" That those colonies, like all other countries, cursed with Slavery, produce much less than they would do, under equal laws, and improved agriculture, cannot be doubted. But that Barbadoes, allowing for the above *peculiar* circumstances, has declined much more than the rest, I can by no means admit: nor does it follow from the statements of Mr. E. himself; of which the following is an analysis.

1. Mr. E. after Postlethwayte, states the sugar crop of 1736, at 22,769 hhds. of 13 cwt. or 19,800 hhds. of 15 cwt. [The former is the precise number mentioned twice over, as the crop of Barbadoes, in 1730 (not 1736) by the compilers of the Modern History\*; but they do not specify the weight of the hogsheads.]

2. Mr. E. states the average annual exports, for eight years, ending in 1748, at 13,948 hhds. of sugar, and only 600 bags of cotton; exclusive of rum and other valuable articles, foreign to the present comparison.

3. He observes that the author of the European Settlements, published in 1761, calculates the average crop at 25,000 hhds. of sugar.

4. He says that, for three years ending in 1786, the yearly exports "had fallen" to 9,554 hhds. of sugar, and 8,331 bags of cotton, &c.

Hence, concludes Mr. Edwards, Barbadoes "has fallen off nearly one-half in the annual growth of its principal staple;" namely, sugar. He admits that the hurricane of 1780, contributed to this great defalcation. But he did not consider, what his own state-

\* Modern History, vol. 27. pp. 170, 209, Dublin edition.

ment indicated, that the same hurricane occasioned a very great addition to the quantity of cotton; to the cultivation of which the sugar planters were driven by the destruction of their works; as well as invited by its high price, and the facility and cheapness of its culture\*. Had Mr. E. attended to these circumstances, and to his own accounts, in other parts of his valuable work, he would have seen that the increase of the cotton, made up for the decrease of the sugar. In proving this, instead of the 8,331 *bags* which are quite indeterminate in weight, we must take the 2,706,000 *lbs.* which Mr. E.† states as the export of cotton from Barbadoes in 1787.

Now this cotton, at Mr. E's own estimate of 112 *lbs.* per acre, would require 24,160 acres of land; and this again, at his own average of half a hogshead the acre‡, would have yielded 12,080 *hhds.* of sugar. To these add the 9,554 *hhds.* of the fourth head of Mr. E's statement, and the sum 21,634 *hhds.* will be the *virtual* sugar crop, at the period he mentions;—even without making any addition for the loss of about 3,500 Slaves in the hurricane.

Thus Mr. E's alleged extraordinary defalcation, in the sugar crop of Barbadoes, appears to resolve itself into his inattention to his own statements.

That this virtual crop is not overrated, may appear by comparing it with the actual crop, on an average of ten years ending 1768, which was 22,320 *hhds.* of sugar, exclusive of 2,200 *hhds.* consumed in the

\* See Suppl. to P. C. Report, p. 32.

† Edwards, vol. 1. p. 355.

‡ Edwards, vol. 2. pp. 276, 355

island \*;—a great part of it by the *excess* of its density of population over that of the other islands; and which great part ought, of course, to be added to the sugar crop of Barbadoes, to put it on the same footing with those islands.

Dr. Campbell averages the annual export of sugar from Barbadoes, for the century ending in 1760, at 16,000 hhds. with what correctness, I have not the means of positively determining; as he offers no authority for this estimate. But it would appear to be too low, when it is considered that a few years before the commencement of *that* century, the cane land of Barbadoes yielded, on an average, two hhds. of sugar per acre; that, in the reign of Charles II. the usual crop of that island was 30,000 hhds. and that, in no part of the century in question, does it appear to have fallen below 13,948 hogsheads †; but was more generally half as many more.

Since mentioning, in a former letter, the common notion that the soil of Barbadoes is worn out, I have found that a skilful agriculturist, Mr. Strickland of Yorkshire, reprobates the exhaustion of the land as the cause of the poor crops which he observed in several parts of North America. Mr. Long is equally severe on the practice of “working land to the bone,” which appears to be too common in Jamaica ‡. But such

\* Frere, p. 122.

† See Campbell's *Considerations*, &c. p. 27; Ligon, p. 95; Oldmixon, vol. 2. p. 166.

‡ See the *Observations on the States of America*, communicated to the British Board of Agriculture, in March 1796; Long, vol. 1. p. 441. Long's whole chapter on the agriculture of Jamaica, is highly interesting.

instances only show that the lands are badly managed; not that they are permanently exhausted.

After all, it is readily granted, that if the lands of Barbadoes averaged, at first, about two hogsheads of sugar the acre, or that, at a later period, the annual crop was 30,000 hhds.—and probably both statements were true—then Barbadoes has indeed declined, in comparison with her former *self*. But it will by no means follow, as Mr. Edwards affirms, that she has declined in comparison with the junior colonies; St. Christophers, perhaps, alone excepted.

Jamaica, for example, in 1787, which was selected by the late able Inspector General of the Customs, as a year of average produce, in all the islands, contained 256,000 Slaves; and the gross value of her total exports, by the London prices current, was 2,136,443*l.* sterling. Barbadoes, in the same year, had 62,115 Slaves: the proportional gross value of her total exports, should therefore have been only 518,379*l.*; but it really was 539,605*l.* sterl. or above four per cent. more than the Jamaica proportion. Again: Jamaica, in the same year, employed 85,888 tons of shipping; Barbadoes, in proportion to her Slaves, should have employed only 20,840 tons; but she really did employ 26,917 tons, which exceeds the Jamaica proportion by more than twenty-eight per cent.\* This great superiority of the shipping em-

\* The above numbers are taken from Account No. 15 P. C. Report, and the elaborate Suppl. to No. 10, by the late Mr. Irving, Inspector General of the Customs. Mr. Edwards adopted the numbers, but did not seem to have been aware that they overthrow his hypothesis of the *extraordinary* declension of Barbadoes. See Hist. of the W. Indies, vol. 1. p. 230, &c. 352, 355.

ployed by Barbadoes, is no doubt owing to the great stowage, or space, occupied by cotton, of which that island produces, or did produce, after the great hurricane, a far greater proportion than Jamaica. Were we to insist on the above *peculiar* demands on Barbadoes for provisions, her pre-eminence would appear yet more striking. But more than enough has been said to consign the too prevalent mean opinion of Barbadoes, to the crowded catalogue of vulgar errors; and to prove that that island is still entitled to hold her former rank, as "the most windward, the best peopled and the most powerful of any of our Sugar Colonies\*."

Yours, &c.

W. D.

## LETTER XV.

### *Grievances of the Sugar Islands.*

Proposal for ceding or abandoning the islands, and retaining the Guiana colonies—if adopted, would ruin the islands,—to favour a set of rash adventurers.—Slaves of high and dry islands would soon die in Guiana swamps.—Island planters to be "*induced by discouragements*" to remove to those swamps.—The  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. duty already a sufficient discouragement.—At 63*sh.* sterl. per cwt. sugar now yields no profit to planter—and he pays a part of the British duty.—Prime cost in islands of raising one cwt. of sugar, increased from about 11*s.* 7*d.* sterl. to above 20*s.* in 50 years, ending 1807;—while the London price improved not.—Hence again, the present Slave-system ruinous.

DEAR SIR;

MY last was concluded in the words of an uncommonly well informed author, who, in estimating, as we

\* See p. 4 of Young's Considerations which may tend to promote the settlement of our new W. Indian colonies, printed in 1764. —Blome, in 1672, called Barbadoes, "a potent colony:" p. 66.

have

have been in some measure doing, the comparative importance of our West Indian possessions, was not inclined to overrate the *old* islands; but rather to exalt the *new* at their expence, if not on their ruins. His object apparently was, to attract people and capital from the old sugar colonies, to the ceded islands, the lands of which, when he wrote, were on sale, under his own direction, for account of Government. What were this author's motives, we pretend not to determine; but he certainly wrote like the early planters of Jamaica, when, dreading that Charles II. would *sell* that island, as he had Dunkirk, they presented to that needy monarch, "Considerations why he should *keep*" Jamaica rather than the "worn out" Caribbees\*;—which, they insinuated, were more proper subjects of traffick.

A late mercantile traveller† however, in treating of a similar case, does not confine himself to insinuations; for he has the boldness to propose openly, in a work dedicated to a minister of state, that "*the ISLANDS should, in preference, be ceded to France and Holland, if any thing must be restored; or, by artificial discouragements of their agriculture, be induced to transfer to GUIANA, the mass of their population and capital.*" —What! ruin our old colonists, to favour the wild projects of a pack of adventurers who have foolishly sunk millions of their own money, and cruelly sacri-

\* The paper has been preserved in Plome, p. 54. See also Long. vol. 1. p. 294.

† I decline naming him; but his book was published in 1807, and dedicated to the Right Hon. William Windham. To do him justice, however, this author holds several abolition doctrines; and, on the whole, is by no means destitute of information; especially relative to the late Dutch sugar colonies.



fixed many thousands of African lives, in the poisonous marshes of Berbice and Demerary! Surely, if our old colonists have not exhausted all their strength and spirits in violently spurning away that *inestimable blessing, the Abolition of the Slave-trade*, they will oppose any such insulting and ruinous attempt, with all their power and influence. There can be little doubt that every well disposed man in the country, including the whole body of the Abolitionists, forming at least nine-tenths of the people, of all ranks and descriptions, would cordially second their efforts. But it is to be feared, that true Wisdom dwelleth not with men who were so fatally blind to their own interests, as to persist in defending the Slave trade, I had almost said *per fas et nefas*, even after they saw the Guiana speculators employ it in gorging\*, by *murderous* exertions, all the markets in Christendom, with their staple commodity!

I have said that the transfer proposed by this author, would be the ruin of our old insular colonists. The *veteres migrate colòni*, would be to them worse than an order of banishment. They must necessarily leave behind them their buildings and fixtures, formerly worth, on an average of sugar plantations, 5,000*l.* sterling †, and now not to be erected for a great deal

\* This deplorable event was foreseen by Mr. Long, vol. 1. pp 525, 529, 536; and vol. iii. p. 681. It has been ably traced to over-planting, and this again to that most execrable source of mischief, the Slave-trade, in the Edinb. Review for Oct. 1807, and Jan. 1809. See also p. 49 of Mr. Stephen's excellent pamphlet, *New Reasons for abolishing the Slave-trade*.

† Long, vol. 1. p. 462; Edwards, vol. 2. p 254; Report on the Commercial State of the W. Indies, July 1807, p. 9.

more money. They would incur a still greater loss in their Slaves who, like all other people, when once settled in families, as very many of them are in the old islands, cannot bear sudden and involuntary removals, to different parts of the same island, and even of the same plantation \*. What then would be the consequence of tearing up their families by the roots, to transplant them from the high and dry soil of the islands, to the pestilential “bogs of death” which pollute the surface of Guiana? The transition would be most perilous to the poor people, even if those bogs were already drained and formed into plantations; but if covered with mangroves and other marsh wood, I believe the lives of the Slaves destined to clear and drain them, could not be safely insured for 30 per cent. per annum.

But the most extraordinary part of this writer’s proposition, is that the planters of the old islands are to be “*induced* by artificial *discouragements* on their agriculture.” This, to be sure, is a *new* mode of inducement! But its proposer does not seem to know that Barbadoes and the Leeward Islands are *already* loaded with a tax of four and a half per cent. on their gross produce; which they find averages about ten per cent. on their neat proceeds†. We may defy the

\* Long, vol. 2. p. 435. One of the most humane and exemplary men in Barbadoes, as before observed, lost fifty Negroes, in one year, merely by removing their houses from one part of his plantation to another. See Supp. to P. C. Rep. p. 17.

† Barbadoes and the Leeward Islands, viz. Antigua, St. Kitts, Montserrat, Nevis and the Virgin Islands, pay the  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. duty; but Jamaica and the Ceded Islands, namely, Grenada, St. Vincent, Dominica, (and Tobago) are exempted from it. The history

author himself to name a more effectual way of discouraging agriculture. Indeed, but for the immediate ruin of removal, the unfortunate islanders must long ago have anticipated his "modest proposal;" and have fled to his boasted land of *El Dorado*, or to any other land, free from this grinding oppression. Ten per cent. on an *average*, implies that many planters pay a great deal more; even as far as 20 per cent. Add to this, that the crops of the worst land, and of that which requires the greatest labour and expence, and is farthest from the shipping places, pay equally with those of the best and most easily worked, and conveniently situated plantations. In bad years, when the produce does not pay the expences, which are always great, this exaction may be called a tax on the planter's losses, and not on his profits. It is, in short, one of the most grievous and unequal taxes which, even at this day, oppresses any description of British subjects.

It is perhaps the only direct contribution which ever was made to Great Britain, *within* any of her colonies; and its effects, and its diversion from its original purpose, with other circumstances attending it, form a curious piece of financial history. This "fatal duty," as Oldmixon justly calls it, miserably distresses the islands which pay it; without materially contributing, on the grand national scale, to the resources of the empire.

Having been naturally led to take notice of the four-and-half per cent. duty, paid by some of the

story of its origin and amount, may be seen in Oldmixon, vol. 2. p. 21, 168, &c. and in Edwards, vol. i. p. 339, 342, &c.

islands,

islands, I might proceed to describe the disadvantages and grievances suffered by the British Sugar colonies, in general. But I have neither room nor leisure for so *extensive* an undertaking; and, if I had, the subject has been so fully handled by other writers \*, that I should despair of adding to their statements any thing new, and still more any thing likely to be of service to the unfortunate colonists. Mr. Steele and I, among others, have endeavoured to show them how they may *relieve themselves* from the principal causes of their misfortunes; but, in the case before us, they must look for relief to the wisdom and justice of the Legislature, and not to the unsupported suggestions of private men. I shall therefore confine myself to the brief consideration of a question, with regard to which, many people find it difficult to satisfy their minds: namely, How far the interest of the planter is affected by the British taxes and charges on sugar.

That taxes on articles of consumption are ultimately paid by the consumer alone, is considered, by most people, as a self-evident axiom, applicable to all cases and commodities whatsoever. But the following particulars will demonstrate that the state of the sugar market, for a number of years past, hath afforded a striking exception to that general rule.

From the above-cited Report of the Committee of the House of Commons, on the state of the W. Indian Colonies, in July 1807, it appears that the Planters adduced evidence which satisfied the Committee, that

\* See the Hist. of Barbadoes in Oldmixon's, 2d vol. ch. 9; Modern Hist. vol. 27. p. 183 et seqq. Burke's Europ. Settl. part 6, ch. 9; Long, book 1, ch. 8; Edwards, book 6, ch. 5.

(exclusive of new Negroes, interest of capital, and the  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. duty, paid in Barbadoes and the Leeward islands) every cwt. of muscovado sugar cost the planter, before it left his own curing-house, 20s. 10d. sterl. in Jamaica, and 19s. 6d. in the other islands. To simplify the statement, say, for all the islands, 20s. sterling. Add 16s. a moderate allowance for freight and mercantile charges, and 27s. the British duty; and the sum (63s.) will show that, when the gross price in London is three guineas, per cwt. the planter receives—*nothing*; and that, when it is less than three guineas, he incurs a positive loss, equal to the difference. In the first case, he loses his profit, and, in the second, a portion, *also*, of his capital. In either case, the more sugar he brings to market, the greater is his loss; and this loss is equal to that part of the British duty, which he pays.

For example, in the eight months, preceding July 1807, the gross price of sugar, at this market, was only 60s. 6d. which wanted of three guineas, 2s. 6d. so that *the planter then paid half a crown per cwt. (over and above all his profits) towards the British duty.*

It is not denied that sugar is a fair subject of taxation. But, as the Committee observe, “it is obvious that the duty is heavier than the article can bear, at its present price;” and they propose a mode of relief which appears to be at once ingenious, simple and equitable both to the Planter and to the Government. See the Report, p. 5.

In addition to the respectability of the authority, I have a personal reason for confiding in the statements  
just

just quoted. For, in Feb. 1794, I attempted to calculate the cost, in imported supplies and island expences, (exclusive of new Negroes, the  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. duty, and interest on capital) of raising one cwt. of sugar, at three different periods; and the following were the results, and the cotemporary prices, and duties, all in sterling money.

	Prime cost in islands.	Gross price in London.	British duty.
In Jamaica, A. D. 1751 *	11s. 7d.	39s. 10d.	4s. 10d.
In Jamaica, - 1774 †	15 10	35 6	6 4
In all the islands, 1787 ‡	20 3	45 0	12 3½

As the want of explicit *data* rendered my calculations, especially the last, circuitous, opcrose, and somewhat intricate, I placed but little reliance on the results, till I found that the last (20s. 3d.) did not differ more than might be expected, from the results (20s. 10d. and 19s. 6d.) which the Committee had the means of ascertaining from more determinate, though less extensive, grounds of computation. They calculated from the accounts of particular plantations, and I, having few such accounts, was obliged to infer my conclusions from the exports and imports at large.

\* Inquiry concerning the Trade, &c. of Jamaica, written in 1751, printed in Jamaica in 1757, and reprinted in London, 1759, pp. 16, 49, 81, 91. At p. 16, the selling price of sugar, per cwt. in Jamaica, in 1751, is stated at 18s. sterling.

† Long, vol. 1. p. 500, vol. 2. p. 590; Edwards, vol. 2. p. 267.

‡ P. C. Report, Answers to Query 22, Accounts, No. 4, 8, 25, and Sup. to No. 10; Long, vol. 1. p. 536; Edwards, vol. 1. p. 234, 235, and vol. 2. p. 267. At p. 435, of vol. 2, Mr. Edwards considers 45s. per cwt. a high medium gross price, in G. Britain, for several years previous to 1791.

Having no authentic accounts of the freight and mercantile charges, at these respective periods, we can infer nothing, with certainty, about the planter's returns.

But one thing is clear, from our three calculations, supposing them not altogether wide of the truth, or, at least, that the errors are nearly *proportional*, namely, that in thirty-six years ending in 1787, the expence of raising one cwt. of sugar *increased* above 75 per cent. while the London price (exclusive of duty) *decreased* nearly  $6\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. Our estimates include not new Negroes, who, however, as we stated above (p. 260.) were advanced in price 140 per cent. in twenty years of the thirty-six. But our estimates do include the foreign and island expences of maintaining the gangs, which *also* rapidly increased; but *how much* we have not the means of ascertaining.

Thus then, all things conspire to prove that the returns of Slave-labour on sugar plantations, have been, and are very rapidly declining. The ground on which the planter stands has never been firm, and it is now *fast* sinking under his feet. To save himself from the opening gulf, *he must reduce the enormous expence of producing his article*, by some such means as those recommended by the success of Mr. Steele, and other wise œconomists in sugar cultivation. He must abandon the Slave-market;—spare the labour and the lives of his Slaves, and effectually provide for their subsistence, by means of the plough;—call forth their latent vigour by rewards;—and abate, in every possible way, the waste, theft, idleness, desertion, pretended sickness, and secret reluctance and opposition, which *must*  
*always,*

*always*, more or less, diminish the labour of *Slaves*. For a Slave, as Adam Smith observes, *can* have no other interest than to eat and waste as much, and work as little as possible.

We might be thought to refine too much, were we to attempt to calculate the diminution of labour caused by these *moral evils* of Slavery. We have indeed ventured far enough already, considering the nature of our data, in our endeavours to compute the comparative quantity of labour performed by Slaves and Free-men. And beside, we could offer no estimate half so satisfactory as that given above (p. 124.) of the actual saving, by the system recommended; which *saving* is nothing else than the *amount of what is lost* by attempting the *impossibility* of curing the moral incapacity of *Slaves*, by force instead of reward.

Yours, &c. W. D.

## LETTER XVI.

Project for transporting Chinese to the W. Indies.

That project supposes the non-existence of all the evidence respecting the natural increase of Slaves—to which the late great loss of Slaves in Jamaica is no exception, and why—Slaves now in the W. Indies, more than six times as numerous as all the English who had emigrated to all N. America, before 1751, when they had multiplied to a million—with plough, &c. are more than sufficient for the labour.—A Chinese labourer earns more in the E. Indies, than can be afforded to him in the West.—Industrious Chinese will not be easily selected.—Voyage from China to W. Indies will be at least thrice as long as from Africa—and probably very sickly, like other E. Indian voyages.—Women will not be easily procured.—Voyage will certainly be a losing one.—A crew of 56 sailors cannot keep in order 400 Chinese, without force.—The *free* Chinese are to be *bought* in China, and *sold* for their passage in W. Indies—and will be  
treated



treated accordingly.—Probable consequences of receiving, or of rejecting, their judicial testimony.—They will be hated by the Blacks, despised by the Whites, and finally degraded and oppressed.—An attempt to realize such a project has already utterly failed.—The Planters condemn the project—finding that the Chinese did not half the work that the Negroes performed.—In China, agriculture encouraged by laws and customs.—In W. Indies, Chinese will find anti-agricultural laws and customs—*A few* Chinese sugar planters of property, with *their own* servants, might do good in W. Indies.—*Cargoes* would do mischief—and would endanger the peace of the islands.—The whole project is a congeries of contingencies—and, if practicable, would be pernicious.—Its evil consequences not foreseen by its advocates.—Would lead to endless abuses.—Some Chinese laws.

P. S. *Mr. Clarkson's* opinion of this project.—Chinese need not be brought from the E. Indies.—Some active W. Indians should rather go thither, to learn the Chinese methods—as the early Barbadoes sugar planters went to Brazil to learn the methods there practised.

DEAR SIR,

WHEN you asked my opinion, some time ago, of a plan for introducing Chinese labourers into our sugar islands, I considered it as a project calculated to revive in Asia, a traffick which had been abolished in Africa, and therefore not likely to be seriously entertained; adding that such a project would be enough to blow up the colony in which it should be attempted. But I have since found that even then a pamphlet\* seriously, and no doubt conscientiously, recommending *that* as a proper measure for introducing free labour into the West Indies, had been published by an author who

\* Outline of a Plan for the better Cultivation, &c. of the British W. Indies, being the *original Suggestion* for providing an effectual Substitute for the African Slave-trade, &c. 100 pp. 8vo. London, 1807. The author's name is on the title; but I omit it.

says

says (Introduct. p. 3) that "it met with the unqualified approbation of His Majesty's ministers;" and that the measure itself has since been actually proposed, and respectably supported, in the House of Commons. I shall therefore give it all the attention which my present engagement in other concerns will permit.

In the first place, this project, among other inadmissible assumptions, tacitly supposes the non-existence of all our evidence establishing the increase of the Negroes, both in the confessedly favourable climate of the West Indies, and in that of North America, where the winters are so much against them. In the West Indies, not only the domestic Negroes, both of rich and poor, and those employed in planting provisions, cotton, &c. have been proved to increase, but even those on sugar plantations, under tolerable treatment. In the 11th ch. of the Abstract of Evidence, you have enumerated above thirty sugar estates, on which the Slaves kept up or increased their numbers by the births. These can only be a specimen of a far greater number, of which you had no accounts. But they are quite sufficient to prove that, in the West Indies, as in every other country, sufficient food and moderate work tend invariably to the preservation and increase of the Negroes, as well as of the rest of the human species.

The late decrease of the Slaves in Jamaica, cannot be admitted as an exception to this universal rule; unless their good treatment could also be established. Mr. Mathison states that, in 1810, the deaths of the Slaves in that island exceeded the births by more than 10,000; but then he leaves us no room to doubt that this enormous

mous waste of human life, was owing to the very causes, which our evidence\* ascertained above twenty years ago, and which unhappily appear to be *still* in full and general operation. Every one of those causes, however, are found to yield to the powerful and easy remedy which Mr. M. (at p. 103.) briefly comprises in the words, "*Feed abundantly, and give fair play.*" No effectual law in favour of this remedy has, to the present hour, been enacted by the colonial legislatures. But they who voluntarily adopt it, are sure to feel its benign operation, in the vigour of their gangs, and the general prosperity of their affairs; and they who neglect it, will of course be ruined, in spite of importations from China, or any other country. And it would be only misleading such men to teach them to depend on a resource so very remote and precarious; or on *any* resource whatever, but that of carefully economizing the labour and the lives of the Slaves already in their possession. It would, in my opinion, be extremely unwise to hold out, to persons of such a character, any other alternative than reform or ruin.

There are now in our islands more than half a million of Slaves; or more than *six times* the number of all the English who had emigrated, to the whole of North America, before the year 1751; when they had multiplied to above one million; though it was thought that hardly eighty thousand had been brought over the sea\*. But it is more to our purpose to observe, that the Slaves now in the islands, with the help of cattle and proper implements, are *far more than sufficient* for

\* See Dr. Franklin's Thoughts on the Peopling of Countries.  
the

the business of the planter; a truth which, it is hoped, has been satisfactorily established in the foregoing papers.

The author before me not only assumes the opposite hypothesis, but, contrary to what hath been proved above (p. 248) from writers of acknowledged credit and experience, he makes "the expence of breeding a Slave to exceed 100*l* \*." This mistake appears to be owing to his evident want of personal acquaintance with *West* Indian affairs; which will induce me to pass over several other important errors; and to take notice of those only which most nearly affect the present question.

The circumstance which seems to have turned the attention of the author of this project to the Chinese, is their industry, not only at home, but in Java and other parts of the East (p. 22, &c.) where they often acquire property. But what motive should induce such people to emigrate, with their wives and children, who are admitted to be essential to the success of the project;—unless they are to be told that, in the land of *promise* to which we are going to convey them, they will have far better opportunities of acquiring property? But will this representation be literally true? By common labour about Batavia, they used, some twenty years ago, to earn from 9*d.* to 10*d.* sterling per day, with proportional allowances for extra hours and quali-

\* In Barbadoes, as before intimated, and no doubt in the other islands, many valuable Negroes are raised by people who, except the mothers of the infants, never were worth 100*l.* in the world. Their whole art consists in common attention, and giving them a part of their own humble fare.

fications\*. Our author tells us (p. 77) that with moderate exertion, they now earn about 18*l.* sterl. per ann. at Prince of Wales's island. In the West Indies, the average earnings of the Slaves, old and young, for their owners, may be from 3*d.* to 4*d.* sterl. per day. Mr. Steele paid his prime labourers not quite 6*d.* Three of the best informed of the respondents examined by the Privy Council (Rep. p. 341) stated "that a planter can so little afford to give an European or free Negro one shilling per day for his hire (which is a sum it cannot be conceived either the one or the other would work for) that, if such a planter could employ his gang of Negroes, throughout the year, for wages at a much lower rate, he never would think of cultivating his ground, were it the most productive spot in the W. Indies." Yet this very shilling sterling a-day, which the Chinese can earn in the East Indies, and which most certainly cannot be afforded to them in the West, is however to be *promised* to such of them as will consent to be transported from the one to the other. See p. 77. It is not easy to distinguish this part of the project, from that which was of late practised, to a great extent, to *induce* the peasantry of these kingdoms to emigrate to America; not to allude to the

\* Mr. Botham, in P. Council's Rep. part iii. p. 472.—Yet after paying this *comparatively* high price for labour, the Batavian planter could afford prime clayed sugar at little more than *three ha'pence* sterl. per pound, or at about half the sum which the making of clayed sugar costs the West Indian planters, before it is removed from their own estates. Such is the advantage of employing *free* labourers, assisted by cattle and proper implements, instead of *forced* labourers, "scratching the ground" with the hand-hoe! See *St. Venant*, as quoted p. 284, above.

operations

operations carried on, in the course of *trade*, on the coast of Africa. It would be rash and illiberal to insinuate that such is the deliberate intention of our author, or of any friend to this Chinese project; but such, undoubtedly, is the direct tendency of the project itself; and similar, if we may trust to past experience, would be its effects.

We are told (p. 69) that the success of the scheme will depend on “the selection of a *proper description of cultivators*,” and on excluding “*vagabonds*.” So then, after all, those same Chinese, on whose frugality and industry the whole project is founded, turn out to be, like all other men, a mixture of good and bad. The good will not be very likely to offer themselves; and, if they were, it would not be very easy for the selector to ascertain the habits of men whom he never before saw! The vagabonds, it is granted, would ruin the whole scheme. Our author admits (p. 72) that the Chinese emigrants, if not vagabonds, are, however, “of the most indigent description;” which is rather an equivocal mark of industry and frugality, in any people; and exposes all people to injustice and imposition; especially in countries of Slavery.

It is proposed that the emigrants in question should first be transported to a *dépôt* at Mindanao, one of the Philippine islands, and thence to the West Indies. Now this last voyage will be, at least, thrice as long as that from Africa to the West Indies, commonly called the middle passage; in which the average mortality exceeded one-fourth of all the Negroes taken on board\*. And is it not highly probable that the mortality of the

\* Abstract of the Evidence, &c. chap. 3.

“indigent”

“indigent” Chinese, will also be very great? It will be in vain to expatiate, as the advocates for the Slave-trade sometimes did, on the long voyages performed by Capt. Cook, with a trifling loss of lives;—unless the like costly accomodations and precautions could be afforded, in the voyage in question, and a *Cook* could be found to conduct it. The Spectator laughs at a quack, for pretending to “cure long voyages.” Had the quack undertaken to prevent the diseases produced by such long voyages as that proposed, his advertisement, though less ridiculously worded, would hardly have been less ridiculous in itself. For long voyages, in hot climates, and in crowded ships indifferently supplied with provisions and water, must necessarily produce great misery and loss of life. And without extreme œconomy in point of room, provisions, water, and fuel, the transportation of the Chinese cannot be profitably effected. The necessity of œconomy will be as much greater in the proposed Chinese trade, than in the late African, as the voyage will be longer. But I should apologize for writing thus to you, who proved five-and-twenty years ago, that “every pitiful saving” was made in the Slave-trade; and that our East India-men (chiefly from the length of the voyage) lost more sailors, than ships engaged in any other considerable voyages, the Slave-ships alone excepted\*.

The

\* Impolicy of the Slave-trade, pp. 70, 76. Of 910 seamen employed for a year in the Bristol Slave-ships, were lost 200; in E. Indiamen 37; in W. Indiamen 21; in Petersburgers 10; in Newfoundlandmen 10; in Greenlandmen 9. The deaths, in the three last trades, were just about equal to those of men between the ages of 20 and 35, in all Sweden. See Essays annexed to ed. 4, of

The author is at some loss how to procure Chinese females; for he admits (p. 71) that "it is not the custom for females to emigrate." He therefore seeks an "explanation of the cause of emigration having been hitherto entirely confined to the male sex;" and finds that females "could not be obtained without an advance of money" to the junk-owners, who are to bring them to Mindanao, after having bought them (*bought those free people!*) from their parents, whose property they are considered to be. "But," says the author, "should any obstacles arise, the number of women required may be readily obtained at Mindanao." Is not this like saying that, if the women cannot conveniently *get* to Mindanao, they may, however, be readily *found* there? Yet this is the foundation of one of the *main* pillars which support the whole fabrick!

Supposing a proper assortment of Chinese collected at the depôt in Mindanao, we have next (p. 74) an account of the disbursements and receipts attending their transportation to the West Indies. An *old* Indian is to be bought, fitted out, and provisioned for 22 months. With a crew of 56 men, she is first to carry out convicts to Port Jackson, and to call, in her return, at Mindanao, and take on board 400 Chinese for the

of Price's Annuities, p. 20.—The learned and benevolent Bishop Berkeley, in his interesting medley of Platonism and Tar-water, intitled *Siris* (or his worthy commentator, Mr. Prior, of Dublin) ascribes the vigorous health of the Newfoundland sailors to their free use of spruce beer, which is only a palatable kind of tar-water. In the style of *Siris*, I may add, that Dr. Douglas, in his Summary, vol. 1. p. 149, says, he "cannot investigate the *ratio nominis*." May it not be, that as the water of the Nile, of which *Siris* was one of the names, restores languishing vegetation, so the water of ~~tar~~ invigorates debilitated constitutions?



**West Indies.** Her whole cost, and the expence of the voyage, are to amount to 30,613*l.* to be refunded by the freight of the convicts and other articles, including 10,000*l.* freight of produce from the W. Indies home, and 3,200*l.* advanced to the Chinese, and which they are to repay by instalments. But even supposing this freight to be obtained, and the instalments duly paid, the balance in favour of the voyage will be only 1,467*l.* It does not, however, readily appear how freight to the amount of 10,000*l.* is to be got, in the W. Indies ; where almost every ton is pre-engaged to stated ships, which, notwithstanding, often come home with half a load, or less ; and are, at all times, sufficient, or nearly so, to bring home the crops. Thus the proposed voyage will most evidently be a losing one.

We are not told how 56 sailors, after being reduced by sickness, or death, before they reach Mindanao, are to keep in order 400 Chinese (chiefly men) under all the causes of discontent, which must unavoidably occur in such a voyage. How this can be done, without the *regime* usual in the Slave-ships, surpasses my comprehension ; so that perhaps I was rather lucky in guessing, before I saw the present pamphlet, that what you mentioned was a project for transferring the Slave-trade from Africa to Asia.

The 8*l.* a-head advanced for their passage, with the expence of their maintenance, till they raise their first crop, and the price of the stock on their lots of land ; these charges (to which we may venture to add a proportion of the loss on the voyage, the value of their houses, and the rent of their lots) are to be deducted by instalments, from the wages of those "indigent" people.

people. See p. 77. In plain terms, their time is to be sold, or (which is the common and more accurate phrase) "*they* are to be sold for their passage;" like the poor people allured from these kingdoms by American *crimps*, and sold in the United States, under the name of "Redemptioners;" of whose sufferings I gave a sketch, at p. 31 of "Hints to the People, &c." published ten years ago. See also Act 43 GEO. III. ch. 56.

Now I should be glad to know what chance the *dingy* Chinese *heathens* will have of better treatment, in the West Indies, than our own *white* people experience among their *quondam* fellow-subjects, the *Christians* of North America; where the general treatment of persons of servile condition, though bad enough, is however, not so bad as in the islands. For "the evidences unanimously maintain, that the usage [even] of Slaves is better in America than in the West Indies\*."

We are told indeed (p. 75) that the Chinese are not to be disposed of individually, but are "to form a separate and independent colony;" and are to be paid for their labour, in proportion to the clear produce of plantations to be allotted to them *alone*, "with all necessary buildings and machinery, and a sufficient stock of cattle and canes." This is an outline of a plan which Mr. Botham describes† as being established near Batavia, which he himself successfully practised at Bencoolen, and which he recommends, *mutatis mutandis*, to the planters in the W. Indies; where he had previously managed a sugar plantation, in the W. Indian

\* Abst. Evid. before H. of Commons, &c. p. 108, Edin. edit.

† In the P. C. Rep. p. 473. I propose to insert the substance of Mr. Botham's very interesting evidence in the Appendix.

mode; and visited all the islands, English and French. But he certainly never proposed that the Chinese should half circum-navigate the globe, to put that plan in execution; and probably would not have envied the proposer the merit of this "original suggestion." That plan, as practised near Batavia, evidently supposes the residence of the proprietor, in the country, if not on the estate. Without this, Mr. Botham knew that it would not be easy to settle accounts between the labourers and their immediate employers.

But, in the project under review, it does not appear *who* are to be the employers of the Chinese; whether "public-spirited W. India proprietors, or a company;" for both are mentioned, in p. 75. In either case, it may be presumed, that the employers will be *absent*; and it will be the business of their agents, as usual, to make the most they can for themselves. And who are to adjust the accounts between them and the Chinese? Who are to see the Chinese righted? It will be said, The colonial magistrates and courts. Be it so. But what is to be their rule respecting the testimony of the Chinese? We are told (p. 76.) that "their moral, civil, and religious conduct with respect to each other," ought, as little as possible, to be meddled with. But, when differing with persons not Chinese, their conduct *must* be meddled with. Are the magistrates and courts then, who, when white people are parties, reject the testimony of every individual of African descent, Free or Slave, Christian or Pagan, to admit the testimony of the Chinese Pagans? If they *do not*, the Chinese will have *no legal protection* against the injuries of white men; and if they *do*, the African race will

will be apt to complain of this fresh injustice, in a *louder tone* than they have hitherto used.

Another very material point to be settled is, Whether or not the evidence of Slaves is to be taken against Chinese, as it now is against the unhappy persons *called* Free Negroes and Mulattoes ?

It is indeed very easy to foresee, that there will be no good-will between the African race and the Chinese intruders. Our author is so much aware of this; as to insist, p. 75, that his "Chinese shall not be separated;" but "form, as it were, a separate community," in the same colony with the Negro race. Yet he does not seem to be aware of any danger from this *impe-rium in imperio*. But, at the markets, on Sundays and holidays, the two races must necessarily come together; and if they come into *collision*, they will be apt to strike fire, and blow up the whole colony; in spite of the puny exertions of a few sickly white men. This is a very serious consideration; and it is incumbent on all concerned to be cautious how, in the present feverish, critical times, they hazard the peace of the islands, by introducing an outlandish tribe, who, it is not pretended, are to incorporate with the Negro population.

Their incorporation with the Whites is still less to be expected, or indeed desired. The European race hold that "Negroes, Indians, Mulattoes" (and why not Chinese?) are, or ought to be, "no otherwise esteemed than as goods and chattels." See p. 334 above. — Why not Chinese? I say. A poor white man must be very hungry, if he deign to eat and drink with the descendant of a Negro; though the latter may be intrin-

sically his superior ; cleanly in his habits, and moral in his conduct \*. And would *he* condescend to be familiar with a dingy Chinese *heathen* who, as our author tells us, p. 24, feeds on rats, snakes, dead cats, and other garbage ? This would be really degrading. By the white vulgar, the Chinese would be called Long-haired Mulattoes, or China Indians, or by some other name indicating their inferiority to white men. In short, such is the state of public opinion in the West Indies, that the poor Chinese would have nothing to expect but jealousy and hatred from the Blacks, and the most sovereign contempt from the Whites ; in one word, that utter debasement to which plantation field labourers are already reduced ; and, like them, would, in all probability, be ultimately excluded from the very protection of the laws.

The author confesses that an attempt to introduce Chinese into the West Indies, has already failed ; and, as usual in such cases, he ascribes its miscarriage, not to any defect in the project itself, but to errors committed in its execution. The truth, however, is, that projects of sudden population have always proved expensive to mankind. This is the observation of Dr. A.

\* The higher classes of the Negro race, may be supposed to resent this contempt by a similar feeling towards the poor Whites ; which, however, they generally take care not to express. The common Negroes are not always so prudent. Among themselves, they are apt to call the lower whites, contemptuously, "*Poor Backras.*" They sometimes ridicule their meagre fare, by silly humming, to a merry tune of their own, "*Racoon fat and dry, bonavist ;—Pigeon-milk for poor backra.*" The Racoon is a wild animal resembling a badger. Bonavist is a kind of bean, introduced from Bonavista island.

Ferguson,

Ferguson, who brings, as an instance, the multitude of men who perished in the founding of Petersburg \*. But tropical settlements afford examples more in point. The French ministry formerly sent a number of people together to St. Domingo, where they all perished with astonishing rapidity. The same fate was experienced by a body of 550 Frenchmen sent, by private adventurers, to Guadaloupe; and by 12,000 men landed, by order of the government of that nation, on the banks of one of the rivers in Guiana†. Many expensive attempts, as well as “*fine promises and seeming encouragements*,” were formerly made and offered, to procure white settlers for Jamaica; and no fewer than eleven acts of the Assembly were passed for that purpose. Among others, “a colony of Palatines” was introduced; but not a single family of them succeeded, and the whole project ended in smoke and misery†. What, indeed, was the African Slave-trade, the prototype of the present project, but an example, on a monstrous scale, of the truth of Dr. Ferguson’s position?

It is not, however, explicitly stated that the Chinese landed in Trinidad, 193 in number, all died off. But we may conclude that many of them did; for we are told, p. 89, that, after being conveyed from Macao to Prince of Wales’s island, and thence to Bengal, they

\* See Ferguson on Civil Society, who quotes Strahlenberg. In some one of the periodical publications, I have read an account of the miseries suffered by a large body of Polish peasants whom the great Frederick caused to be suddenly removed from their native country, in order to people some waste lands, in his hereditary dominions.

† Justamond’s Raynal, vol. 4, pp. 132, 182, 229.

† Long, vol. 1. p. 426, and vol. 2. p. 508. Inquiry, &c. p. 33.

were obliged to remain there, "till they were cured of the *leprosy*", and other diseases." If this was the case before they entered on so long a voyage, they were probably landed at Trinidad, in a state fitter for the sick-house than for field-labour. Be this as it may, we are informed, p. 91, that those people gave occasion to the planters to "condemn the experiment." And no wonder; for the expence of their transit, from Bengal *only*, was nearly 40*l.* sterl. each; and it was found that, though those Chinese were not incumbered with wives and children, "a Negro did as much work in a week, as one of them in a month †." The high opinion of Chinese industry, expressed in the pamphlet before me, appears to have been formed from observing its effects in gardens and little portions of provision-ground. But this, as I remarked many years before the present performance existed, is a very different affair from productive hard labour, on a large West Indian sugar-plantation;—as different as the work of gardeners is from that of ploughmen, or rather of plough-cattle. The Chinese mentioned by Mr. Botham, were regularly trained to the planting of canes, and the making of sugar; for he tells us that they were "considered as artists in their several branches." They were, moreover, assisted by *their*

\* \* The leprosy is generally considered as at once incurable and highly contagious. Fortunately it is not very common among the Negroes. But if, in the present instance, some other cutaneous disorder has not been mistaken for that deplorable malady, this alone would be an unanswerable objection to the introduction of Chinese into the West Indies.

† Mr. Stephen's Speech, 4th April 1811, as reported in the Newspapers.

own cattle, working in their own ploughs and carts. But, as before observed, it really does not appear that we have it in our power to offer to *many such* Chinese, any *fair* inducement to emigrate, from their present comfortable settlements, to the West Indies.

“The flourishing agriculture of the Chinese,” says an author of acknowledged credit\*, “is neither owing to the particular management of their cultivators, nor to the structure of their plough, and sowing machine, but to their government and their laws, preserved in the hearts of an innumerable people, rather than in obscure codes, dictated by quibbling and designing men. I confidently repeat,” adds M. Poyvre, “that, in every country on the earth, the state of agriculture depends solely on the established laws, joined to the manners, and even the prejudices, to which those laws give birth.” Now if these agricultural observations of M. Poyvre be true, and if those of Mr. Steele and others on the *anti-agricultural* prejudices, laws and manners of the West Indies† be also true; then it is not easy to foresee any advantage from mixing, with an already discordant and motley population, a race of people who will hate (and not without reason) the laws and customs of their new country, as cordially as they love those of their native land. But, though utter strangers to the West Indian laws, and customs, and prejudices, and

\* *Observ. sur les Mœurs et les Arts des Peuples de l'Afrique*, &c. par M. Poyvre, ancien Intendant de l'Isle de France; Maastricht, 1779, pp 130, 144.

† See Long, vol. 1. p. 96, 403; vol. 2. p. 493, *et alibi*; Barbadoes Society of Arts, p. 61, above; Mr. Steele, in the first part of this work, almost throughout.



cordially hating them, I repeat that the Chinese *must* be governed by them, in their intercourse with the white and the black races. Among themselves, however, they may observe their own customs;—as long they can hold out against the ridicule and opposition of all around them. In short, if the new-come Asiatics conform to the customs of the West Indies, the end of introducing them will be, in a great measure, frustrated; and if they do not conform, they will, in all probability, be practically treated by the vulgar, as the *Gypsies* of the West Indies; as you know, they are already considered, by some of the learned, as the *Egyptians* of the East.

These are the readiest of my thoughts, on a slight and hasty view of this project. I cannot, at present, see any good likely to result from adopting it; at least in the *large* way proposed. The author himself suggests none; but that of superseding the labour of the present Slaves by that of free Chinese;—of Chinese who are to be *called* free; but whose women are to be *bought* in China, who are all to be *sold* for their passage, in the W. Indies, and finally treated in the way which we have not scrupled to anticipate. I should have remarked sooner, that he takes it for granted, p. 21, that the present Negroes will not work for pay; although Mr. Steele was probably the *first* and the *only* planter who ever tried them with wages! and with what success, he himself has fully described above.

If, indeed, a few Chinese sugar-planters, of competent property, and under the special protection of the British government, had encouragement to settle in the West Indies, with labourers of their own choosing,  
their

their example might probably introduce their admirable methods and implements, used with so much efficacy by Mr. Botham. But from the introduction of whole cargoes of mere Chinese paupers, not bred to the cultivation of the sugar-cane, and the making of sugar, nothing but *oppression*, or *disorder*, or *both*, is to be expected; and really the times do not appear to invite the trying of experiments on the peace of the sugar islands; unless such experiments have that peace for their immediate or ultimate object, and are soberly and wisely calculated to promote it.

I have endeavoured to point out some of the more evident and palpable bad effects of this project; and these would, in all probability, be accompanied with many other evils which no man can foresee. *Uno absurdo dato, mille sequuntur*. The epithet absurd may be thought too strong. But we may at least say, that this plan is too hypothetical to be easily realized. There are as many *ifs* in it, as articles. *If* a depôt can be procured in, or near, Mindanao; *if* that depôt can be cheaply and peaceably kept in our possession; *if* the junk-men can procure enow of women; *if*, in procuring them, those gentlemen can contrive to elude the vigilance of the Chinese government, and to escape the bastinado; *if* it can be "made their interest" to run the risk; *if* they can convey a proper assortment of both sexes to Mindanao; *if* the selectors there can separate the industrious from the "vagabonds," among people whom they never before saw; *if* the "refuse" can be properly disposed of; *if* sufficient provisions, &c. for the voyage can, at all times, be obtained, at the depot; *if* about 400 Chinese can be kept in peace and subordination,

nation, under all the trials of an uncommonly long voyage, by about 50 sickly sailors, without the usual wrist and ancle ornaments ; if the voyage be attended with a trifling loss of life, and with an expence of only 8*l.* a head on the effective Chinese landed in the West Indies ; if 10,000*l.* in freight home, can be procured, in a trade chiefly preoccupied ;—if, I say, all these *ifs*, can be soberly considered as rational probabilities, then the mercantile part of the speculation *may be* successful. In the agricultural part, a good many more *ifs* will occur ; but these may be safely left to the employers of the Chinese (whoever they may be) who will not be apt to expend any great sums on people who, after all, do only about a fourth of the labour performed by the Negroes.

In short, the whole business is a mere project ; and is repeatedly so called by its author. It is true, that many admirable improvements were, at first, no better than projects. But they were probable, if not promising projects ; and this is neither the one nor the other. It is not even a plausible, and far less a harmless project. I have neither leisure nor ability to examine it thoroughly ; but I see far enough into it to pronounce that it is impracticable, by *fair* means, and that, if it were practicable, it would be pernicious. This, however, implies no censure on the author and his friends. The end they proposed, that of introducing free labourers into the West Indies, is undoubtedly praise-worthy ; but they have unfortunately mistaken the means. They, or at least our author, did not know enough of West Indian affairs, to see either the insufficiency of this plan to remedy the acknowledged evils

evils of the Slave-system, or its' tendency to kindle combustion among the inflammable materials which the thing we call our *policy* hath accumulated in the sugar colonies ;—even while the neighbouring conflagrations were blazing in our eyes, and their horrors, as we pretended, appalling our hearts !

I have viewed this project, like the other subjects of these papers, chiefly in an œconomical and prudential light, and even *this* it can by no means bear. But were we to let in upon it the lights of justice and humanity, it would vanish like a ghost at the rising of the sun. For example : it does not appear that, at the depôt, the junk-men, the *bringers*, are to be asked *how* they procure the emigrants. It is, however, admitted that the Chinese government is extremely jealous on that head, and that the women, at least, are to be *bought* ! The junk men are probably not very scrupulous casuists ; and *we* are confessedly to *pay* them to deceive their own government, and to get for us the *articles* we want. But those articles happen to be human beings, whose *consent* is necessary to the disposal of their own persons. The Chinese parents are to be *paid* for their daughters. See pp. 71, 72. Now, if to the question, “Wilt thou go with this man ?” any girl should accidentally answer *No*, what will be done ? The father wants the money, the junk-man wants the girl, and the girl herself wants to stay at home. If *force* is used, where is the girl's *freedom* ? if *fraud*, where is the bringer's *honesty* ; or the father's, if *any* father could be a party to such a transaction ; or *ours*, if we knowingly partake in it ? Surely the fautors of this project have not given themselves time to examine it,  
and

and to trace its consequences; or they must have seen that nothing short of the *morality of the Slave-trade* can reconcile either its principles, or its probable practice, to the tender consciences of those who are to put it in execution.

As it is rather puzzling for a man to write about a business with which he is not well acquainted, I at first thought of nothing more than a few queries on this subject. But, observing that my author knows as little of West Indian, as I do of East Indian affairs, I thought that, like him, I might venture to offer what I had to say, in a more determinate form. I recollected too, that the Chinese were *men*; and that, on the simple and universal principles of human nature, Montesquieu, Hume, Beattie, Smith, Anderson, and others\*, had reasoned very ably and usefully on Slavery, without having ever observed (as I have for a series of years) its practical effects, and even before a particle of evidence on the subject, had been published;—recollecting this, I say, there appeared nothing very presumptuous in arguing this question, chiefly on the simple assumption that the Chinese, as well as the West Indian Whites and Blacks, are men of like feel-

\* I do not include Franklin; because he was practically acquainted with Slavery and Servitude, in the Slave-states of America; and has so far forgotten himself as (in his generally candid "Information to those who would remove to America") to talk of "soldiers, *servants*, and thieves;" just as Dean Swift did of "men of honour, captains, and pick-pockets." For, in the American Slave-states, the situation of a servant is not barely a humble or inconvenient one, as in this country; but is attended with utter debasement, and often with the most deplorable oppression.

ings and passions with ourselves. For I confess to you, that I have no great faith in those theories which give a kind of *transforming power*, moral as well as physical, to climate and other external causes; having always observed that men feel, and think, and talk, and act, very much as other men, of whatever nation, would do, in the like circumstances.

I had accordingly written thus far, without looking into any book which I had formerly read, about the Chinese. I now find, however, in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, article "China," chiefly taken from M. Grosier, that, "though the Chinese laws authorize Slavery, yet the power of the master extends only to those matters which concern his own service; and he would be punished with death, for taking advantage of his power, to debauch the wife of his Slave."—If such teasing and troublesome laws existed in some countries, they would soon become "no better than waste paper!"—"A Chinese father does not give a dowry with his daughter. It is the husband who gives a dowry to the wife."—The Hebrews, and other ancient nations had the same practice. See GEN. xxxiv. 12. Yet they could not properly be said to *sell* their daughters to their husbands, as our author, p. 71, insinuates that the Chinese do. As well may an Englishman, in giving a dowry with his daughter, be said to *buy* her a husband. —"Every father has the power of selling his son, provided (says the law) the son has a right of selling himself\*. This custom, however, is barely tolerated among

\* We pretend not to fathom the depths of this Chinese law. But Montesquieu observes that, if a man were to attempt to sell himself,

among the middling and inferior ranks; and all are forbidden to sell them to comedians, or people of infamous character, or very mean stations." So says M. Grosier. What are the character and station of the junk-skippers, our English author has not told us, nor need we stop to enquire. It is quite clear, and indeed he tacitly allows, that those skippers have no right whatever, even according to the Chinese laws, to entice away either the men or the women of their country; and this is a very sufficient reason against our "making it their interest" to commit the act.

I remain, with great truth and respect,

Dear sir, your sincere friend, and

To THO. CLARKSON,  
Esq M.A. &c. &c.

faithful fellow-labourer,

WILL<sup>M</sup>. DICKSON.

P. S. In your letter of 11th May 1813, you have so briefly and forcibly summed up this Chinese business, that, though it was not intended for publication, I hope you will excuse my subjoining the following extract.

"First: Let us suppose the Chinese to be brought to an island where plantations are managed on the old plan of Slave-labour: there would be endless quarrels between the masters and employers of the Chinese, and the owners and overseers of the Slaves. The

himself, the buyer would give nothing, and the seller would receive nothing; since the seller, and *all* that belongs to him, would become, *ipso facto*, the property of the buyer. Consequently a man cannot sell himself, or his own person. He can only sell his time and his services, for an adequate maintenance. And if he cannot sell himself, much less can he sell any other man;—an argument, which, if justice had any thing to do in the business, would cut up Slavery by the roots.

latter,

latter, in their rides, or excursions, would sometimes fall in with the Chinese labourers, on the roads; and, whenever they did, if the poor people did not make proper obeisance to them, they would probably take the liberty of beating them. The Chinese would naturally look to their employers for protection; and quarrels would arise between the masters of the two; so that their respective plantations would be constantly embroiled with one another.

“Secondly: It is evident that one or the other system must predominate. Two such anomalous systems could not go on together, in the same island, without clashing. If the Chinese prevailed, *there must be Insurrections on the part of the Negroes.* If the Slave-system prevailed, *it must end in the Slavery of the Chinese.* Now, that the two systems might be kept distinct, in the same island, Chinese must manage Chinese, and W. Indian managers, their own Slaves. For if an ordinary W. Indian manager were to be appointed to a Chinese plantation, then assuredly, *whips, and chains, and all the apparatus of Slavery, would follow in his train.* They must therefore be kept distinct, or all would be misery. But even every effort to keep the two systems distinct, would not secure the island from the hazard of some explosion. Take the case how you will, I think, it must end in the Insurrection of the Negroes, or the Slavery of the Chinese.

“If the Chinese plan could be adopted usefully and without mischief, it could only be done in some W. Indian island where there were no other inhabitants but Chinese themselves. In this case, the power and authority of the magistrates should be accurately defined;



finer;—the rights and privileges of the labouring class should also be defined;—the validity of their oath should be secured;—they should have regular wages;—in short, should be on the footing of English labourers, and have the same protection of law. Their employers, or, at any rate, the persons set over them and their work, should be thoroughly acquainted with their habits and character, and with the East Indian mode of cultivating sugar-canes: *No one person should be allowed to rule, or direct, or employ them, who had been used to superintend Slave-labour. One such person would confound the whole scheme.* He could not help striking and abusing them.—This is the only case, *if thus limited*, where Chinese (*allowing the taking of them away from home to be unobjectionable*) could be usefully employed, and without detriment to themselves and others.”

The proviso, “allowing the taking of them away from home to be unobjectionable,” I am sure you do not allow, except for the sake of argument. You have too minutely considered the methods of obtaining Slaves in Africa, and the miseries of the middle passage, not to see that the project in question threatens the Chinese with the like dreadful evils; and even with a great aggravation of the horrors of the voyage! In short, you are convinced that, on the large, *cargo* scale, the whole project is utterly inadmissible.

Even your plan of a little *separate colony* of Chinese planters of skill and property, with their labourers, on some small island (say, one of the Grenadines) where they could be conveniently *visited by* planters from the other islands, who might be disposed

to

to copy their example ;—even this plan, I say, still supposes the especial and continued protection of Government ; and such an expenditure for the purchase of the island, the erection, or purchase of works, &c. as would afford room for some little snug and comfortable *jobs* ; a species of frugality which, *in days of yore*, used to be a good deal practised, by the handlers of public money, in the West Indies. Indeed the limitations and conditions you enumerate (every one of which, I see, would be necessary to insure success) are at once so important and *contingent*, as to abate very much any rational hope of our ever seeing even this modified plan carried successfully into execution.

But why should you and I puzzle our pates, in forming and proposing schemes which will never be realized, and for which we shall never be thanked ? We must take care not to play the projectors in our turn. For my own part, though I have, for many years, been considering how the Slaves could be relieved, consistently with the interests, and even the prejudices of their owners ; I have never ventured to bring forward any plan for that purpose : nor should I now venture to recommend Mr. Steele's improvements, and the use of the plough, if they were not something more than mere brain-spun projects, and had not already succeeded in practice.

But what need is there, after all, for a single Chinese to cross the Indian and Atlantic oceans ? If the West Indians want oeconomic information, as some of the best informed of them confess they do, what is to hinder them from travelling for it, like other men ? Not to mention the celebrated example of Peter the Great, even

even this country owes some valuable improvements to travellers ; of which Sir Thomas Lombe's silk-mill is a noted instance. The Scotch gentlemen farmers travelled, to acquire a part at least of the improvements, by which they have so much benefited themselves and their country. I have conversed with several intelligent foreigners, particularly a gentleman from Copenhagen, and two Swedish noblemen, the Count Fermer and another, who were on a tour in this country, in quest of information, both in agriculture and manufactures. The early planters of Barbadoes, after receiving the sugar-cane from Brazil, resorted to that country to get instructions how to treat it ; by which they profited so well, that, in less than three years, they made good "white lump-sugar." Ligon, p. 85. And why could not active and intelligent men, assisted, if necessary, by subscription, be sent from the W. Indies to Batavia, &c. to learn the admirably economical methods of planting, boiling, and distilling, so often above alluded to? About 35 years ago, large rewards were offered, both by the British and foreign sugar colonies, for abating the ravages of the ants and other vermin. This was accordingly attempted, but without success, by the late ingenious Mr. Smeathman, and others ; and surely the object in question is not less important, and far more likely to be attained.

W. D.

# APPENDIX,

CONTAINING

NOTES, DOCUMENTS, AND DETAILS.

No. I. LAWS of BARBADOES, cited pp. 3, 46, 185, &c.  
with some REMARKS.

"It appeared to me evident that the evil could never be effectually cured, till certain local Laws of the colony should be repealed," &c. p. 3.] The following are the clauses of the *Laws of Barbadoes*, referred to in several parts of the foregoing papers, particularly at pp. 3, 46, 185, chiefly as *abridged by Mr. Hall*, at the end of his authorized edition of those Laws, in folio, London, 1764.

Act No. XXVIII. passed in 1661, clause 3. "At the plaintiff's request, execution shall issue fourteen days after judgment is entered, directed to the marshal or his deputy; to attach, in the first place, any cotton, tobacco, ginger, sugar, or indigo, belonging to the defendant; if none such, then the Servants\*, Negroes, cattle, or moveables; if none such, then his land and houses; and lastly, if none such, to arrest and keep in custody the person of the defendant, until he satisfy the plaintiff. All which moveables shall, by the marshals, be exposed to sale, the first market day in that precinct†, Saturday excepted, after 80 days have elapsed since the attachment, between the hours of 12 and 4; and the produce thereof immediately delivered to the Plaintiff. If the defendant neglects to bring such moveables to market, the marshal shall there give notice what they are, and sell them the next day, where they lie.

\* Indented White men and women servants are here meant. There have been none in Barbadoes, for many years; but, when this Act was passed, there were great numbers. Their general bad treatment has been already noticed. The iniquity of the servile laws of the colonies, appears in the *Abridg. Plant. Laws*.—But we should except New England which adopted the wise and merciful Laws of Moses, respecting Servants, or Slaves. The Law of Deut. xxiii. 15, 16, would effectually prevent all oppression.—W. D.

† Barbadoes is divided into five precincts, in which Courts of Common Pleas are held every 4 weeks, from Jan. to Sept. See this No. 28, cl. 1.—W. D.

In the precincts of St. Andrew's and St. Joseph's, where there is no market, the defendant may choose his market; and if the goods attached do not produce sufficient to satisfy the plaintiff, the marshal shall attach further, and sell at the next market following. If any buyer be sued for goods so bought, he may plead the sale in bar, which shall be accepted by the court; and all such sales shall be certified by the marshal or deputy, and filed in the office of the precinct.

Clause 7. "Upon any attachment on land, the Chief Judge shall issue a warrant of appraisement, directed to seven able appraisers, if twenty or more acres of land, and to five, if less than twenty acres are attached; directing the said seven or any five of them, or the said five or any three of them, to view and appraise the same upon oath, in writing, under their hands and seals. And the marshal by the judge's precept, shall summon, attend, and swear such freeholders, as directed in this act. Appraisers shall be able and eminent parishioners; but neither relations, friends, or enemies of either party.

By No. LXII. passed in 1675, clause 2. Marshals and constables may attach *part* or *parcel* of any wind-mill, mill-house, or other buildings, or things entire, for satisfaction of any debt, and the same, so attached, to appraise and deliver in severalty.

No. LXXXII. passed in 1688, clause 19. "If any Slave under punishment by his master or his order, shall suffer in life or member, no person shall be liable to any fine for the same. But if any person shall wantonly or cruelly kill his own Slave, he shall pay into the treasury 15/.\* If he intentionally so kill the Slave of another, besides paying the owner double the value, and 25/.\* to the public, he shall be bound to his good behaviour, by the next justice of the peace, during the pleasure of the Governor and Council; and if any person kill another man's Slave by accident, he shall only be liable to the owner's action at law. But if any person kill a Slave by night, out of the common road, stealing or attempting to steal his provisions, &c. he shall not be accountable for it †.

No.

\* These fines, as appears by the statute at large, Hall, p. 120, are sterling money, and amount respectively to 21l. and 95l. Barbadoes currency. — W.D.

† Some particulars of the history of this horrid clause, have been already inserted at p. 341, above. It has, I apprehend, lately been repealed in Barbadoes, and in all or most of the other islands; so that the murder of Negroes and

No. CXLVIII. passed in 1721, clause 8.\* “No person whatsoever shall be admitted as a freeholder, or an evidence, in any case whatsoever, whose original extraction shall be proved to have been from a Negro, excepting only on the trial of Negroes and other Slaves; nor shall any other person or persons whatsoever, who are not duly qualified, according to the limitations and directions herein expressly mentioned and appointed, be deemed or allowed a freeholder or freeholders, to choose, or be assembly-men or vestry-men for any parish in this island, or to serve as jurors on the trial of any real actions.”

The following materially affects the unfortunate people called Free Negroes and Mulattoes.

No. CLXXX. passed in 1739, clause 5. “And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That hereafter the evidence or testimony of any Slave, where the same is supported with very good and sufficient corroborating circumstances, against any free Negro, Indian, or Mulatto, whether baptized or not, shall be received, allowed, and taken before any justice of the peace, or in any court of record, or other judicature in this island; and shall be deemed and adjudged, as the same is hereby declared to be, as good and valid and effectual in the law, to all intents and purposes whatsoever, as if the Slave giving evidence or testimony was free, baptized, and not under servitude or bondage, to any person whatsoever.”

Here Mr. Hall makes the following remarks:

“By an Act of this island, No. 148, clause 8. No descendant from a Negro shall be admitted a freeholder, to choose or be chosen a representative, or vestry-man for any parish, or a juror to try real actions, or an evidence in any case, except on the trial of Slaves.

“By the 5th clause of this Act, it is declared, That the and their descendants, by Whites, will now be a capital crime—when the fact can be proved; which the rejection of the evidence of the former, in such cases, renders very difficult, &c. &c.—Mr. Hall's note at the bottom of No. 82, page 121, is the more worthy of notice, as he was a member of the Assembly, and is cautiously sparing of his remarks on the laws. “If Slaves,” says he, “were treated with more humanity than they generally are, and the laws of this island, for the ordering and governing of them, were duly put in execution, they might be rendered very useful as well as valuable.”—Mr. Hall here shows a laudable inclination to speak his real sentiments, on a subject about which, prejudice and seeming interest apart, there can be but one opinion, among men of principle and reflection.—W. D.

\* As this clause is but short, I have taken it from the statute at large, in Hall, p. 256.—W. D.

testimony of a Slave, supported with very good, and sufficient corroborating circumstances, against a free Negro, whether baptized or not, shall be received before a justice of the peace, or in any court of judicature here; and shall be as valid, to all purposes, as if each (such) Slave was free and baptized.

“N. B. The comparison at the end of this last clause, is very improper. It declares that such evidence shall be as good and valid, as that which, by a precedent Act, is declared to be *no* evidence; for the being free and baptized, does not qualify a descendant from a Negro, to be an evidence, but on the trial of Slaves. But *quere*, Whether this improper comparison will defeat the positive part of the clause; by which it appears, that the legislature meant to make that evidence which was not so before?”

Act No. CCIV. Hall, p. 370. “An Act for the revision of all and every the Public Laws, Statutes, and Ordinances, which are now in force within this island; and in lieu thereof to frame and pass a complete and well digested body of New Laws for the said island.” Passed Oct. 31st, 1753.

“Whereas, by an additional Instruction, given by the Lords Justices at Whitehall, the sixteenth day of April, one thousand seven hundred fifty and two, in the twenty-fifth year of His Majesty’s reign, to His Excellency the Hon. Henry Grenville, Esq. Captain general and Governor in chief of His Majesty’s islands of Barbadoes, St. Lucia, Dominica, St. Vincents, Tobago, and the rest of His Majesty’s Caribbee islands, lying to windward of Guadeloupe, in America, or to the commander-in-chief of the said islands for the time being, it is, for the wise and gracious reasons therein recited, signified to be His Majesty’s will and pleasure, and His Majesty’s said Governor, or commander-in-chief is thereby required and directed, jointly with the Council and Assembly of His Majesty’s said island of Barbadoes, forthwith to consider and revise all and every the Laws, Statutes, and Ordinances which are in force within the said island, excepting only such as relate to private property, or are otherwise of a private nature; and in lieu thereof to frame and pass a complete and well digested body of New Laws; taking especial care that, in the passing of each law, due regard be had to the methods and regulations provided by His Majesty’s Instructions to his said governor, or commander-in-chief; and that no law of any kind

kind whatsoever, making a part of such New Body of Laws, be passed without a clause inserted therein, suspending and deferring the execution thereof, until His Majesty's royal will and pleasure may be known thereupon. To the end therefore that His Majesty's will and pleasure herein may be complied with, Be it enacted, by the Hon. Ralph Weekes, Esq. President of His Majesty's Council, and commander-in-chief, &c."

[The foregoing are the words of the statute, and probably of the very important Royal Instruction therein-mentioned; and the following the substance of Mr. Hall's marginal contents.—W. D.]

Cl. 1. That three members of the council and six of the assembly or any five, of whom two are of the council and three of the assembly, be a Committee to revise the Laws in force, and to frame a complete body of New Laws, each containing a clause to suspend the same, till His Majesty's pleasure is known.

Clause 2. Such committee to meet when and where they think fit; to call for papers, to employ clerks, to take the opinion of the attorney general, &c. and to certify expences to the commander in-chief, who is to order the treasurer to pay the same with interest, if incurred, in preference to all other orders. Such expences not to exceed, in the whole, 1000*l.* Barbadoes currency. [714*l.* 5*s.* 8*d.* ster*l.*]

Clause 3. Officers refusing obedience to the committee to forfeit 100*l.* currency.

Clause 4. New Laws to be laid before the Legislature: if approved, to be passed, with suspending clause, and sent home for the King's approbation or disallowance.

Clause 5. Vacancies by death, &c. to be filled by commander-in-chief in council, and by assembly respectively. Dissolution of assembly not to stop the committee's proceedings.

Clause 6. Present Laws to continue in force, till superseded by New Laws, approved by His Majesty.

The last Act does not appear to have ever been carried into effect; nor can I find in Mr. Hall's compilation any subsequent public act containing a suspending clause. On the contrary, by the Barbadoes act No. CCIX. passed in 1755, being "An act concerning White servants," all the former iniquitous and oppressive Laws, respecting those poor people, and



and which certainly came within the intention of the above Royal Instruction, are confirmed, by President Weekes, and the council and assembly, without any condition, reservation, or limitation whatsoever. There are, indeed, as already observed, no indented white servants now in that island, excepting apprentices under age. But servants of a much higher order are, I apprehend, still liable to be harassed under those statutes, which convert every little fault into a pretence for extending the terms of servitude to their present masters!—By the 19th clause, of Barbadoes law No. 30, passed in 1661, *Overseers*, and hired, or covenant servants, riding, using, or lending the horses, cattle or carts of their masters, are subjected to three months' servitude, for each offence. In the year 1775, or 1776, an attempt was made to oppress a free born Englishman, by taking advantage of this clause. One Mr. A. a native of this country, who managed two neighbouring sugar plantations, one of them belonging to a Mr. M. a man of the law, used occasionally to work the cattle of one plantation, in carting to town the produce of the other; to the relief and advantage of both. M. took no notice of this, till A. began to press him for some considerable arrears of salary; when behold! it appeared that the limb of the law—the “vile attorney,” had taken his measures so as to be able to prove such a number of violations of the above law, as, at three months for each, amounted to five or six years of servitude! He accordingly set up this *legal* claim for servitude, against the poor manager's *just* claim for salary; and preparations were made on both sides, for bringing the case before a court. Whether it was actually tried or not, and how it terminated, I do not recollect. But it had gone so far, that the late Mr. F. Skeete, a very promising young barrister, had drawn up, and perhaps delivered an ingenious and interesting speech in favour of A. I remember that his intelligent zeal in the cause of the injured Englishman, was much applauded; and that, after his death, I made a fair copy of his argument, to be sent to his uncle, the late respectable John Brathwaite, agent in London, for Barbadoes.

Qu. Might not Gov. Grenville himself have procured the above Royal Instruction to be enjoined on him? At its date, (Apr. 1752) he had been in his Government 5 years; and must often have experienced the defects of the Laws by which he was bound to regulate his administration.—W. D.

From

*From Poyer's (civil) History of Barbadoes, p. 11, &c. 4to. London, 1808.*

"The Earl of Carlisle's patent passed the Great Seal on the second day of June, 1627, and His Lordship became sole proprietor. The preamble of this celebrated patent, assigns the reason on which it was granted, in these words.

"Whereas our well beloved cousin and counsellor, James Lord Hay, Baron of Sawley, Viscount Doncaster and Earl of Carlisle, endeavouring, with a laudable and pious design of propagating the Christian religion, and also of the enlargement of the territories of our dominions, hath humbly petitioned us for a certain region of islands in our dominions after named, lying towards the north part of the world \*, as yet void, and inhabited in some places, with savages, who have no knowledge of the Divine power, commonly called the Caribbee islands, containing the islands of St. Christopher, Grenada, Saint Vincent, Saint Lucia, Barbadoes, Martinique, Dominica, Marigalante, Deseada, Todosantos, Guadaloupe, Antigua, Montserrat, Redondo, Barbuda, Nevis, Eustatia, Saint Bartholomew, Saint Martin, Anguilla, Sembrera and Enegada, and many other islands, found out at his great cost and charges, and now brought to that pass to be inhabited by a large and copious colony of English †, with certain privileges and jurisdictions belonging to the said government and state of a colony and region to him, his heirs and assigns to be granted.

"By the succeeding clauses, His Majesty did, by the said grant, for him, his heirs, and successors, make, create and constitute the said Earl of Carlisle, his heirs and assigns,

\* That is, north of the equator, or in the northern hemisphere.—W. D.

† "The earl of Clarendon says that Barbadoes was granted, by K. Charles I to the earl of Carlisle, and his heirs for ever, on a supposition that it had been first discovered, possessed, and planted at the charge of the said earl. If these allegations are not true in fact, for which we refer to the history, that supposition is without ground, and consequently the fabric built upon it, had no solid foundation."—Vol. 2. p. 21, of "The British Empire in America," in 2 vols. 8vo. 2d ed. 1741, an anonymous work often quoted above as Oldmixon's, on the authority of Douglas's Summary, &c. vol. 1. p. 362. Had I timely known who wrote the former scarce work, and seen Mr. Poyer's advertisement for it (see his pref. p. 9) I would have lent it to him, if in London. and have been glad thus to contribute materials for his History of Barbadoes, which, after making certain allowances, appears to me very creditable to his impartiality, spirit and ability, as well as to the literature of his native island. Is not the style, however, occasionally, rather too big for the subject?—W. D.

absolute

absolute proprietor and lord of the said region; reserving still the allegiance due to His Majesty, his heirs and successors." It was then added, "And because we have made and appointed the said James Earl of Carlisle, true lord of all the aforesaid province, as he to whom the right belongeth, know ye that we have authorized and appointed the said James Earl of Carlisle and his heirs, of whose fidelity, prudence, justice, and wisdom we have great confidence, for the good and happy government of the said province, or the private utility of every man, to make erect and set forth, and, under his or their signet, to publish such laws as he, the said Earl of Carlisle, or his heirs, with the consent, assent and approbation of the free inhabitants of the said province, or the greater part of them, thereunto to be called, and in such form, and when and as often as he or they, in his or their discretion, shall think fit and best. And these laws must all men, for the time being, that do live within the limits of the said province, observe; whether they be bound to sea or from thence returning to England, or any other of our dominions, or any other place appointed, upon such impositions, penalties, imprisonment, or restraint, that it behoveth, and the quality of the offence requirith; either upon the body, or death itself, to be executed by the said James Earl of Carlisle, and his heirs; or by his or their deputy, judges, magistrates, officers, and ministers, according to the tenor and true meaning of these presents, in what case soever; and with such power as to him, the said James Earl of Carlisle, or his heirs shall seem best. And to dispose of all offences and riots whatsoever, either by sea or by land, whether before judgement received or after remitted, freed, pardoned, or forgiven. And to do and perform all and every thing or things which, to the fulfilling of justice, courts, or manner of proceeding, in their tribunals, may or doth belong and appertain, although express mention of them in these presents be not made; yet we have granted full power, by virtue of these presents therein to be made; which laws so absolutely proclaimed, and by strength of right supported, as they are granted, we will, enjoin, charge and command all and every subject, and liege people of us our heirs and successors, as far as them they do concern, inviolably to keep and observe, under the pains therein expressed; so as, notwithstanding, the aforesaid laws be agreeable and not repugnant unto

*unto reason, nor against it; but as convenient and agreeable as may be to the laws, statutes, customs, and rights of our kingdom of England.*

“And because, in the government of so great a province, oftentimes sudden occasions do fall out, to which it shall be needful to apply a remedy, before the free inhabitants of the said province can be called; and for that it shall not always be needful, in such cases, that all the people be called together, we will and ordain, and by these presents, for us, our heirs and successors, have granted to the said James Earl of Carlisle and his heirs, that he by himself or his magistrates and officers, in that case lawfully preferred, may make decrees and ordinances both fit and profitable, from time to time, that they may be esteemed kept and observed, within the said province, as well for keeping the peace, as for the better government of the people there living, so that they may be publickly known to all whom they do concern. Which ordinances we will, within the said province, inviolably to be kept, upon pain in them expressed; so that those laws be agreeable to reason, and not repugnant nor against it, but as may be agreeable to the laws of our kingdom of England, and so *that those laws extend not to the hurt or discommodity of any person or persons, either to the binding, constraining, burthening, or taking away, either their liberty, goods or chattels.*

“We also, of our princely grace, for us, our heirs and successors, will, straightly charge, make, and ordain that the said province be of our allegiance, and that all and every subject and liege people of us our heirs and successors, brought or to be brought, and their children, whether there born or afterwards to be born, become natives and subjects of us, our heirs and successors, *and be as free as they who were born in England;* and so their inheritance, within our kingdom of England, or other our dominions, to seek, receive, take, hold, buy, and possess, and use and enjoy them as his own; and to give, sell, alien and bequeath them at their pleasure; *and also freely, quietly and peaceably to have and possess all the liberties, franchises, and privileges of this kingdom, and them to enjoy as liege people of England;* whether born or to be born, without impediment, molestation, vexation, injury, or trouble of us, our heirs and successors; any act or statute to the contrary notwithstanding.”

## No. II. NOTE on Page 18.

"By all the best accounts I ever read or heard of the trading coast of Africa—the most miserable," &c. &c. No doubt this language of Mr. Steele was, and still is, but too true of the "Coast" of Africa ~~trading nations~~ of its inhabitants. But Mr. Mungo Park, in his *Travels*, published since the date of Mr. Steele's papers, gives a very different account of the interior of that continent. The cultivation of some of the countries which Mr. Park traversed, the populous towns he visited, the hospitality he experienced, the Arabic schools which he met with, and the manufactures he observed, particularly the very difficult one of iron (the grand improver of mankind) are all so many proofs that civilization has made very considerable progress, in those remote, internal regions.

Indeed the extraction of iron from its ore, and the conversion of cast iron into malleable, are so very remote from any experiments which uncivilized men can be supposed to have occasion, or ability to make, that some authors are inclined to ascribe those grand improvements to a special revelation from Heaven.—Most people must have seen the cotton-cloths, of African manufacture, called Gunea-cloths, so valuable for their strong texture and brilliant colours. Their blues in particular, are sometimes even superior to any dyed in this country. It is stated in evidence, but I cannot now find the place, that Mr. Hilton, of Manchester, said of a Guinea cloth which was shown to him, that it would not disgrace the looms of that town.

The friends of Africa and of mankind, have now to deplore the loss of the honest, intrepid, intelligent, and persevering Park, who fell by the violence of some iniquitous individuals, in his second enterprise. But his first narrative has fully confirmed the numerous facts and hints on African ingenuity, which are scattered throughout various preceding works. And no candid man now doubts that, by ceasing to trade with Africa in the flesh and blood of Africans, a sensible alteration in their favour, will soon be effected; that civilization, which the ravages of the Slave-trade had driven into the interior, will gradually revisit the coast, the most civilized portion of all other extensive, maritime countries; and, in a word, that barbarity will gradually give place to industry and art, among a people, who already  
know

know and value European commodities, and have hitherto paid so dear for them. On this subject, see the Reports of the African Institution, particularly the third, p. 46, which contains some facts, communicated by a Moorish traveller, respecting the central regions of Africa, which strongly resemble those of Mr. Park.

### No. III. NOTE on Page 23.

"*In luxuries of the table—we are greatly reformed,*" &c.] The expensive profusion of the W. Indian tables, formerly exceeded all reasonable, and almost all credible bounds. Ligon (in his History of Barbadoes, p. 38) particularly describes two dinners, on plantations in that island, which would almost bear a comparison with some of our ancient feasts, on great public occasions; and Tryon says, he has been assured that, at a feast made by a Barbadoes planter, 1100 or 1200 bottles of Madeira and claret were consumed. (Friendly Advice, &c. printed in 1684, p. 53.) The tables of the gentlemen of that island, though not so profusely loaded as those of their forefathers, are still plentifully supplied; and their frank and easy hospitality, in the opinion of Dr. Pinckard, "intitles Barbadoes to be ranked among the Friendly islands." See his valuable Notes on the W. Indies, vol. 1. p. 364. It is strange, however, that the Doctor should have mentioned, with any surprise, the "mutton, mutton, mutton, pudding, pudding, pudding, from one end of the table to the other," on a Barbadoes plantation. (vol. ii. p. 100). A little reflection would have reminded him, that this kind of uniformity is often unavoidable, in a hot climate, where fresh meat will not keep; and is more or less visible, in every sequestered place, in every country, hot or cold. Dr. Johnson observes, that, in the Western islands of Scotland, a man who wants to eat mutton, must kill a sheep; a part of one not being procurable, except from some very distant market. If it became a frequent partaker of hospitality, to criticise its different modes, I would say, that, in ordinary times, the genteel people of Barbadoes have nothing to fear from a comparison of their tables with those of this country, or any other which I have visited. A friend of mine happening to be at Martinique, was asked by his *polite* French hostess, if he had ever seen, in Barbadoes, a table so tastefully arranged as hers. "Madam," said he, with  
equal

*equal* politeness, "I have seen more good victuals, decently served, at one dinner in Barbadoes, than I have seen all the time I have been in Martinique!"

To give the bare names of the esculent vegetables, roots, and fruits, produced in Barbadoes, would be tantamount to forming a catalogue of the tropical plants proper for food. These and its other productions, have already been enumerated and described by Sir H. Sloane, and the Rev. Mr. Hughes. Mr. Edwards, vol. 1. p. 198, gives a catalogue of the exotic plants in the botanical garden of Jamaica; and at p. 475, *et seqq.* of the collection of a private gentleman of the name of East, which appears to have as far surpassed that of the public establishment, as the magnificent garden at the Belle plantation of the late Mr. Clarke, of Barbadoes, did that of the Government House. Whether Mr. Clarke's garden might be compared to that of Mr. East, I cannot say; but, from its warm situation, I should think that it was not nearly so rich in European plants as Mr. East's, situated as that was, among the cool, Liguanea mountains. — The useful European plants, which I now *recollect* as common in Barbadoes, are coleworts, spinage, lettuce, parsley, radishes, horse radish, shalots, peas, and grapes, all good; cabbages small, but good; turnips fibrous and indifferent; potatoes from this country, very bad, and seldom raised; but they are carried out, in good condition, chiefly from Lancaster; thyme, sage, mint, rosemary, and other small herbs, very good. I do not know that any tree, native of this country, or any corn cultivated here, grows, or would grow, in Barbadoes.

The pork and poultry of Barbadoes are greatly superior to the same articles in this country; and of the latter there are several species unknown here. The mutton, both of sheep and goats, is far superior to what is commonly sold in the markets of London, and only inferior to the Scotch and Welch. The veal is good, but not in very great plenty. The beef, however, is but indifferent; as grown cattle are seldom fattened and killed, while fit for labour, in carrying the produce to the towns, &c. — Cows' milk is indifferent; that of goats excellent. A little middling butter is made from the former; but no cheese.

The supply of fish is, in general, various and plentiful. I remember once standing on an eminence, and counting 70 sail, and hook-and-line boats at work in-shore, and in the offing; and a beautiful sight it was. Flying fish, in particular,

particular, are sometimes so cheap as to be undervalued by the more opulent whites, and within the reach of the poorest of the blacks. See p. 375, above. Green turtles are caught; but not in very great numbers; as they do not much frequent coasts where there are so many people, and so few extensive sands, as on that of Barbadoes. But they used to be brought from the neighbouring sequestered, sandy shores, in such plenty as to be sold at a pistereen, or a shilling sterl. the pound, and sometimes much lower.

To the hospitality of the colonists of Barbadoes, I may apply the words which I have above applied to their attachment to the King and the Mother-country: *O si sic omnia!* But justice to my subject compels me, however unwilling, to add, that feasting in the "great house" is too often attended with fasting in the field, both of the Slaves, and the White servants and apprentices; and that the fasting is sometimes the effect of the feasting; as in other countries.

#### No. IV. NOTE on Page 26.

"*The meanest of the white people—are less afraid of starving to death than of working like Negroes.*"—It occurs to me that probably *like Negroes*, in this passage, has been used by mistake, instead of *with Negroes*, which we read in the next paragraph. The poorest whites in Barbadoes, would indeed think themselves both degraded and oppressed, by working *with* field Negroes, in the common drudgery of a sugar plantation; and not without reason, for the truth is that *that* drudgery is too heavy for men, and still more so for women of any complexion. But, as observed, at page 26 above, the white militia tenants, and even some small proprietors and their families, certainly do work *like* Negroes, in the comparatively easy employment of raising provisions, cotton, &c. Probably they think themselves degraded by working in that manner; but they must do it, or starve, or plunder the Negroes, as they often do.

The dislike, or contempt of field-labour, is by no means peculiar to the poor whites of Barbadoes; but prevails among free men in every country of Slavery, and is indeed one of the evils, though not the greatest evil of the system. "Where Slaves," says Mr. Strickland, "are doomed to toil,



toil, the free man holds labour to be a degradation. Virginia is in a rapid decline, brought on by their adherence to so pernicious a regimen." See Observations on the States of America, communicated to the British Board of Agriculture, in March 1796.

In the P. C. Report, article Jamaica, p. 283, "the notion that Barbadoes, or any other W. Indian island, was first planted by White persons, without the aid of Negroes, or of Indians, is affirmed to be absolutely and intirely unfounded."—Ligon, however, in his History of Barbadoes, p. 24, says that "ships were sent, from England to that island, with *men*, provisions, and *working tools*, to cut down the woods." At page 27, he says, that the weather is "not so scalding, but that servants, both *Christians* and *Slaves*, labour and travel ten hours in a day." At p. 43, that "for the time of servitude [five years] the servants have the worser lives [than the Slaves] for they are put to *very hard labour*, ill lodging, and their diet very slight."—"If they complain," adds he, p. 44, "they are beaten by the overseer; if they resist, their time is doubled." At p. 115, he says, that the white servants, not excepting the women, "*do the common work abroad*." The same fact is also plainly deducible from Sir T. Modyford's "Directions about a Cacao-walk," inserted at p. 16 of Blome's Description of Jamaica, Barbadoes, &c.

How this work affected their health is another question. Ligon, p. 21, says that, "before a month was expired, after his arrival in Barbadoes, the living were hardly able to bury the dead;" whether from contagion or bad diet, and drinking strong waters, was not certainly known; but, says he, "I have reason to believe the latter; because, for one woman that died, there were ten men, and the men were the greater deboyses." Like other men interested in a new tropical settlement, Mr. Ligon ascribes no part of this mortality to the climate which, in his time, must have been extremely fatal to new-comers from Europe; for, even at present, they are obliged to be very cautious, both with regard to diet and exercise, for a longer or shorter period, according to their constitutions and circumstances. At present also, there is a considerable difference in the comparative mortality of the sexes, among the whites. The men, no doubt, live much more freely than the women, who are very abstemious; but they are

are also infinitely more exposed to other causes of disease, and particularly to hard bustling, and some of them to hard labour, as mechanics. in the sun, and rains, and damps.

On the whole, although we have proved that white people of both sexes *did* labour, *per force*, in the first clearance and cultivation of Barbadoes, we believe that we must yield the point for which our Jamaica writer contends, and which indeed he establishes by facts on respectable authorities; namely, That unseasoned Europeans cannot hold out, for any time, under the heavy labour of felling trees, digging cane-holes, and carrying out dung, in the West Indies. Compared to these, the field labour of the poor whites, and even of most mechanics, is light and trifling.—But there is no need for the Whites to lift a hoe in planting canes; nor for the Blacks to be oppressed by it. The true doctrine on this head is, first the plough, secondly the plough, thirdly the plough!

#### No. V. NOTE on Page 62.

The Negroes killed by the hurricane in 1780, are stated at 2033; the horses at 211, the ox cattle at 6606; and the whole damage at 1,320,564*l.* 15*s.* sterl. P. C. Rep. part iii. article Barbadoes. This list, which distinguishes every fish, appears to have been made up from the returns of the churchwardens, who had not the means of accuracy. But, in the same folio of the Report, it appears that the Negroes given in for the head-levy, in 1780, were 68,271 and in 1781 only 63,248, difference 5,022, *most* of the killed by the hurricane. See also the Report, part iv. Supplement to Account 15, Barbadoes. I remember that, at the time, the people of all descriptions, destroyed, were reckoned between 4 and 5000; as I have said in Letters on Slavery, p. 171. Mr. Edwards states them at 4326, vol. i. p. 353. Mr. Poyer, in his History of Barbadoes, and Dr. Blane, in the Edinburgh Philos. Transact. state the total loss of human lives at above 3000; but the latter adds, that several parishes made no returns of their killed.

In vol. 27 of the Modern Universal History, p. 171, the hurricane which visited Barbadoes, Aug. 10th 1674, is said to have “destroyed 300 houses, 200 people, 8 ships and most of the sugar-works; so that the Barbadians were disabled from making much sugar, the two succeeding years”

What,

What, then, must have been the interruption to the making of sugar, by the far more tremendous convulsion of 1780? Indeed such was the destruction, or irreparable injury to the sugar-works, that many proprietors were obliged to abandon that article, and to plant cotton.

One Mrs. Hussey, a poor white woman, who was born, and had lived in Barbadoes, till her death in 1782 or 3, at the age of 112, told me that the storm of 1731 was not nearly so destructive as that of 1780. Yet I have heard her and other old people, call the former "the breaking up of the island."—Of the latter, I intended to publish some account, from notes taken at the time. But in this, I have been anticipated by abler hands.

A great and inexplicable improvement, in the climate of Barbadoes, took place after the hurricane in 1780. See p. 161 above. I cannot better describe this happy change, than in the words of The Rev. Mr. \*\*\*\*\*, a clergyman of learning and piety, whose treatment of the Slaves, on his large sugar plantation, was uncommonly humane; but who, being a man of studious and retired habits, modestly supposed that he treated them no better than others. Such, at least, appears to have been the impression under which he wrote an apology for Slavery, which I must say, was unworthy of his character, and profession;—though not quite so bad as that of a certain young parson.

"It is (says Mr. \*\*\*\*\*) scarcely credible to ourselves, by what means, and in what degrees, we have been relieved from the ruin which then [immediately after the hurricane] seemed inevitable. Nay more: should we be inclined to draw a comparison between our condition as a community, previously to that event and subsequently to it, there could be no doubt that, in every respect, it is greatly meliorated. If the tide of our prosperity has not flowed as strongly as in those golden days of which our fathers have told us, it has been uniform and continual in its course. The hopes of the husbandman, which before had been so often blasted, have lately been permitted to be realized in the most plentiful harvests. Our credit has been retrieved; and the comforts of comparative wealth and independence have almost generally been restored to us.—Year has succeeded to year, marked with the kindly returns of "the former and the latter rain," the want or the irregularity of which we had, before [the hurricane] been accustomed

tomed to deplore." Vol. 1. p. 336, of Discourses by the Rev. H. E. H—, of Barbadoes, in 4 vols. 8vo. London 1790. Disc. viii; "For the fast day, Oct. 10th 1788, in commemoration of the Hurricane in Barbadoes," from Isaiah x. 25.

In the form of prayer, compiled by the clergy of Barbadoes, for that solemn occasion, no mention is made of "the sins of oppression, which are called *crying sins*, such as cry to heaven for vengeance." See Bp. Lowth's comment. on Jerem. v. 26, *et seqq.* But this kind of reserve is not peculiar to the clergy of Barbadoes; who, as a Body, have not their equals in the British West Indies; for learning, propriety of conduct, and attention to the duties of their profession.

#### No. VI. NOTE on Page 71.

"*At the rate of 266 [working] days in each year,*" &c.] The days of work, rest, or attention to their own grounds, in a year of Negro labour, may be thus stated:

From the days in the year,	-	-	-	365
Deduct, for Sundays,	-	-	-	52
Holidays,	-	-	-	3
Foul weather,	-	-	-	6
			—	61
				304
Deduct again, for sickness, real and pretended,	19			
Runaways and their pursuers,	19			

Clear working days, in the year, - - - 266

The holidays generally given are Christmas, Good Friday, and Easter, and sometimes an additional day to each. Six days will be admitted to be a very low allowance for foul weather. But, as some may think the deductions for sickness and desertion too high, it is proper to state the grounds on which those deductions rest.

1. As to sickness, Mr. Fitzmaurice\* says that in Jamaica, one in fifteen is generally on the sick list; and M. D'Auberteuil† allows the same general proportion of sick

\* In his printed Letter to the East India Directors, from Calcutta, 1793.

† Considerations sur S. Domingue, &c. tom. 1. p. 181.

in St. Domingo. Dr. Collins \* states that no fewer than one-tenth of the gang are sometimes laid up with fevers alone; and, on new plantations, from one-third to one-half with ulcers alone! But we deduct only 16 of the 304 days (which are clear of Sundays, &c.) making 19 days' labour, annually lost by sickness, real or pretended; both of which are generally most prevalent during the periods of holing, dunging and planting; and produce a most serious deduction from the hardest and most expensive field-work.

2. For "runaways and their hunters," Mr. Fitzmaurice, where just quoted, allows one in fifteen in Jamaica. Moreton †, treating of the same island, says that they are often one in ten; and he agrees with Atwood ‡ speaking of Dominica, that the runaways are sometimes lost altogether. In St. Kitts, "almost every plantation keeps two or more of the most trusty Slaves as hunters, constantly searching the mountains for runaways. In some plantations, the number of runaways often amounts to one-tenth of the whole, or perhaps a fifth part of the working Slaves §." "Gangs of ten and upwards sometimes run away from one plantation," from a few days to above twelve months ||. In 1799, there were numerous desertions in Tortola. Nearly sixty ran away from Mr. —'s plantation at Windy-hill. Above twenty of them were taken up in a boat at sea, near Porto Rico, and brought back to Tortola, where two of the number were executed;—and all this, if we may believe the writer ¶, from the kindness of their owners, and the sermons of the missionaries! In short, it sometimes happens, that the Slaves on a plantation "go away in a Body\*\*." I had, and I believe still have in my possession, a Jamaica newspaper, in which are advertised 135 runaways, of whom 48

\* Practical Rules for the Management and Medical Treatment of Negroes, pp. 359, 379.

† Manners and Customs, in the West Indies, pp. 84, 147.

‡ History of Dominica, p. 225.

§ Privy Council's Report, p. 462. Further Evidence, &c.

|| Laws of Barbadoes, Antigua, St. Vincent, and the Virgin Islands, in the Privy Council's Report.

¶ Anonymous, in The Satirist of Aug. 1808, p. 96. I should not have cited this writer, if he had not given the name of the plantation, and of its proprietor; which last I omit.

\*\* See the 5th Report of African Institution 1811, p. 63.

are "*branded*." One man of them is distinguished by having "*both ears crot*," and another by "*his nose and ears being cut off* \*."—But of this enough! my present intention being merely to submit to the reader of these facts, Whether or not it is extravagant to allow (1-16th of the 304 days, or) 19 days, in the year, for desertion as well as for sickness.

The *cruel* waste of property, from the *sufferings* of the runaways, is not so foreign to this statement; nor the 3*l.* curr. or about 43*s.* sterl. paid for *taking* each runaway advertised; the shilling for every mile they are *bought* †; the expence of advertising and of their maintenance, and the fees paid, in gaol, or in the cage, when they are delivered to their owners. This *waste*, I say, attending *forced* labour, is not foreign to the present statement; but I have not the means of bringing it to a satisfactory calculation.

As six days in the year, is an inadequate allowance for foul weather, it seems probable, on the whole, that the average working days in the year are rather under, than over 266. There can be no doubt that this is by far too high an average for gangs which are much "*over-wrought and under-fed*;" and therefore puny and sickly, and disposed to go, for such creatures can hardly be said to *run* away;—emaciated, as many of them are, and quite dispirited by the rigours of their servitude.

#### No. VII. NOTE on Page 75.

"*The Archbishop—asked me—how the catechist at the college proceeded,*" &c.] Codrington college, in Barbadoes, 13 or 14 miles east of Bridgetown, is the only establishment of the kind in the sugar islands. It consisted, when I saw it, before it was damaged by the great hurricane in 1780, of two spacious and elegant stone buildings; the smallest having been designed for the residence of the masters, and the largest forming one side of an intended quadrangle, the centre of which was marked by a handsome obelisk. These buildings stood on the brow of a high and rocky cliff,

\* Branding is not at all practised in Barbadoes; and mutilation very rarely; except, now and then, accidentally, by the sugar mills; or by watchmen, on famished Negroes, attempting to steal the growing canes, or provisions under their care; and whom they sometimes kill outright.—W. D.

† Abridg. of Evid. before the H of Commons, No. 4. p. 49.

overlooking the Atlantic; one of the few perennial rivulets in the island, running parallel with their front; a very romantic situation, and well adapted to both and elevate the mind, and dispose it to contemplate the grandeur of nature and its Author.

This institution is, or ought to be supported, by landed property capable, under *faithful* management, of clearing 3000*l.* sterl. a year; bequeathed, by Col. Codrington, a native of Barbadoes, who died in 1710, to the Society for propagating the Gospel; for the education of a certain number of White youths, and the religious instruction of the Blacks. But it does not appear to have answered the benevolent intentions of its founder, or of the Society to whose care he intrusted this princely donation. It was not indeed to be expected, that the property of a public Body, resident in England, should escape the too common fate of that of private absentees! About 30 years ago, the clear income had become inadequate even to the support of a common grammar school, of 18 or 20 white boys. The school was therefore discontinued; but, I think, the catechist was retained. The affairs of the establishment, however, have since been happily retrieved by the able and disinterested management of its *restorer*, the late benevolent John Brathwaite, Esq. agent for the island.

The progress of the catechist, at least till a very late period, may be gathered from the answer of the old Negro mentioned in the text.—“Christian no’ made for black man in this countery; ’cause black man can’t proof no’n ’gainst white man.” No learned casuist could give a better reason why the Negro race cannot, in general, be expected to become sincere Christians. Yet a good many of them appear to believe most firmly the fundamental doctrines of all religion, and act accordingly. To such we may apply what the late worthy Judge *Howe* said of Moses Lopez and other respectable Hebrews, in Barbadoes: “These *Heathens* (Jews) are among the best *Christians* in the island.”

The want of proper schools is much felt in the W. Indies; except in Barbadoes, where there are, or lately were, several good ones; environed, however, on all sides, by the *morals* of the Slave-system. Mr. Long has a copious chapter (ch. 12. b. 2.) on this subject. He says that a boy “goes to Britain, like a bale of dry goods, consigned to some factor,” and is followed by remittance upon remittance, to teach him

him betimes how to get through his property ; so that he returns to Jamaica " a disgrace to his friends, and a nuisance to his country." Mr. Long adds, that " the education they usually receive, in Great Britain ; does not qualify them for useful employment in Jamaica." And surely nothing can be more true. For what,—I would ask, almost in the words of my late revered friend Governor Hay, himself both a good scholar, and a good accountant,—What can be the use of sending a young West Indian to a great public school to grind gerunds, and be kept a *τύπω*-ing it, for years together ; and thence to the university—to throw away money ; while every really useful acquirement is almost wholly overlooked, and his religion and morals too little attended to ? I would not, His Excellency would add, have him to neglect the classics ; but I certainly would combine them with things more immediately useful. As his property is to be agricultural, and its produce commercial, I would send him to some intelligent farmer, for instruction in the general principles of agriculture, and the œconomy of labour, which are much the same in all countries ; and to a counting-house, to learn to keep his affairs in order, without the help of an itinerant " book-poster."

Indeed the very employment of a book-poster\* plainly proves that there is a defect in the education or industry of many planters. This is even a more serious defect than the want of some instruction in geometry, mechanics, hydrostatics and chemistry ; all which are of indispensable use on sugar plantations. Yet so it is, that young West Indians, of good parts, have been tormented, in *England*, for whole years, with the niceties of prosody, and other small pedantry ; while, though, nearly of age, they were not only uninstructed in the above *essentials*, but could not even answer a simple question in the rule of three, or tell the latitude and longitude, of a place marked on a map ! Although things are now greatly altered, *still* it may not be amiss to add the substance of a passage written by Mr. Oldmixon,

\* An accountant who yearly draws up and balances the plantation accounts from the journal of the manager, &c. ; and not a common plantation book-keeper ; for, as Long says, vol. 2. p. 289, it sometimes happens that those underlings can neither read nor write. Their office is, to carry the keys one week, and the cowskin the next, alternately with the Negro-driver. At first, they were probably book-keepers, in the proper sense of the word ; and have retained the name, after their office has been changed, so as to be hardly distinguishable from that of the driver.



(vol. 2. p. 144) before Codrington College was established; viz. in 1710, the year in which its foundation was laid.

The Assembly of Barbadoes, says Mr. O., have lately had it under consideration to erect a college; towards which great legacies have been left. For it is not every planter who can send his sons to England for education. This is inconvenient even to the most wealthy; from the distance, and the indulgence of their correspondents who flatter the youths, in hopes of their future consignments, by giving them what money they ask for; and hence they contract extravagant habits which often end in their ruin.

Mr. T. Tryon, (continues our author) who well understood the interests of Barbadoes, says, that the sending of their sons to England, has been a very great hindrance to the redress of their grievances. For who can think that those grievances are heavy, when they can afford from 200 to 500*l.* a year to mere school-boys, who often turn out first-rate beaux? Whence it is inferred, *that their fathers must be wonderfully rich, and ought to have their produce well taxed!* And again: Mr. Tryon writes to a Barbadoes planter, in these words; "The loose and extravagant education of your youth, is a sure indication of calamity and misery to your country; for, in a few years, they come to govern the public affairs."

Mr. Oldmixon's concluding words, on this subject, I may almost adopt as my own: "The gentlemen of Barbadoes, says he, may suppose that the author is well acquainted with these truths; and they cannot but know, that he can give a great many exceptions to the above bad custom, but not enow to argue against its being abolished."

The "bad custom" condemned by Mr. Oldmixon, and the other friends of the West Indians here quoted, is only the placing of their sons, with *full pockets*, at schools not adapted to prepare them for the complicated and laborious duties of planters; and not the sending of them to Great Britain for education. For, in this country, better than in any other, may the great lesson of humanity to *all* mankind, be the most easily and successfully learned. It has been already observed, that great good might be done by public professors making the history of Slavery, and the duties of Owners to Slaves, a part of their course of instruction; as was practised, for above thirty years, by my late learned

learned and worthy friend, Dr. Beattie of the Marischal College in Aberdeen.—Yet it is unhappily true, that the best educated Europeans are not always the best Owners and Managers of Slaves. For this I have endeavoured to account, in my Letters, p. 54. Men who, in their own country, either obeyed with alacrity or commanded with gentleness, are but ill prepared to bear with patience the laziness and reluctance of *Slaves*.

No. VIII. NOTE on Page 76.

“*I had learned from some Gentlemen of Barbadoes that—the Slaves were better protected in some of the neighbouring colonies.*”] I know of no cause for this lamentable fact, but that, as Barbadoes abounds far more with Poor Whites than any other colony, the Slaves are proportionably far more exposed to the assaults and depredations of lawless, ignorant, half-starved beings who may be said to have sucked in, with their mother’s milk, all the monstrous prejudices of the Slave-system. But I am not aware that the Slaves elsewhere enjoy any EFFICIENT *legal* protection, from which those of Barbadoes are excluded. The plain truth is, that, in none of the sugar islands, do the Slaves enjoy, nor is it possible that they can enjoy any tolerable protection from laws which admit not their evidence, in any shape, against white criminals:—laws, of the latest and most plausible of which we may truly say,

— *Humana* MALIGNAS  
*Cura dedit leges.*

*Bad*, no doubt, is the best treatment which the Slaves, or at least the *field* labourers, experience in any of the islands; but, with the above exception, their condition is less intolerable in Barbadoes, than in the other sugar colonies. They are even less penuriously fed; which might appear extraordinary, if it were not known, as already observed, that the best peopled countries, *cæteris paribus*, are generally the most plentiful. These facts are admitted on all hands: by Mr. Clarkson in his *Impokey*, 2d ed. p. 106; by his sturdy adversary, Mr. Francklyn, in his *Observations*, &c. p. 56; and, in short, by the general consent of the witnesses, as stated in the Abstract of the Evidence, p. 58, Edinburgh edition.

To account for these facts, it may be considered: 1. That Barbadoes being our oldest sugar colony, several generations

tions of Slaves have been born there; who, though perfectly, and some of them acutely, sensible of their wrongs, are not in general, so impatient under them as imported Slaves; and consequently are less apt to provoke ill treatment. 2. That much more attention is paid to religion in Barbadoes, than in the other islands;—to *that* religion which speaks terror to all oppressors, and comfort to those innocent men who mourn in the “house of bondage.” 3. That there is, in that island, a far greater proportion than elsewhere of ladies, or well educated women; who are, on the whole, much more lenient than the men; of which, one cause, no doubt, is their total abstinence from strong drink. 4. That Barbadoes contains fewer hiding-places for runaways than any other W. Indian colony; and the longer and oftener a Slave deserts, the more severe is his treatment when caught. 5. That persons from the other islands sometimes ridicule the Slave-discipline of Barbadoes, on account of its lenity. 6. That no insurrection has taken place in Barbadoes for more than a century; and the Slaves there are indulged with liberties which would be thought very perilous in most of the other islands. 7. That the small proprietors called ten-acre-men, whose Slaves are employed in the culture of provisions, cotton, &c. which is easy and light compared with that of the sugar cane, abound much more in Barbadoes than elsewhere. 8. That, in that island, the raising of provisions, for its unequalled population, is a prime object, not only with the ten-acre-men, and the white militia tenants, but with many or most of the sugar planters; and fishing is pursued with industry and success. 9. That in Barbadoes, there is less waste of human life than elsewhere. For a long period, the Slaves exported from thence (chiefly from the destructive operation of the Barbadoes law No. 28, clauses 3 and 7) are believed by many to have outnumbered those imported. 10. That the severest punishment, next to death, in the estimation of the Barbadoes Slaves, is to be transported from the island; as they sometimes are maliciously\*, always arbitrarily, and with as little ceremony as cows, or horses. 11. That a much

\* I shall give an instance, which I this moment recollect; though the place is not so proper as could be wished. A clever black girl 13 or 14 years of age, the only child of her parents, having been maliciously and cruelly shipped off, by a certain tyrant, her mother, a spirited African, who had been a person of rank in her own country, destroyed herself by poison; and left the husband and father in an inconsolable condition. The mother was my washer-

greater proportion of the proprietors of large plantations, reside in Barbadoes than in any other sugar island; and from hence, no doubt, proceeds that superior refinement, among the better sort of people, which has obtained for that island the name of "Little England"; a name which, Slavery and its vile accompaniments apart, it exceedingly well deserves.

# No. IX. NOTE on Page 84.

"*Except in the cases of some modern Methodists,*" &c.] This is not the language of Mr. Steele, but of one of his dialogists, whose conversations P. X. merely reports, without giving any opinion of his own. (See p. 8. above.) But I am not sorry at the Methodists being introduced by Mr. A. in the text, in such a way as to give me an opportunity of observing that, when I censured Mr. Whitfield's Journal, at p. 95, of my Letters on Slavery, I did not know that that honest man and faithful minister had candidly retracted the faulty expressions in that publication. "I will freely and readily acknowledge (says Mr. Whitfield) that you and others have had too much occasion for reflection, by several things that have been unwarily dropped up and down in my Journal." See the Monthly Review for 1749, p. 281, on "Some Remarks on the Enthusiasm of the *Methodists* and *Papists* compared, in a letter to the author" (Dr. Warburton) "by George Whitfield."

But, whatever may be thought of some of Mr. Whitfield's opinions, I believe every liberal, well disposed man now respects the memory of the founder of the Orphan School in Georgia, and other great and good works; whose preaching drew personal compliments from the fastidious Chesterfield, and moved even the sceptical indifference of Hume to declare, that "it was worth while to go twenty miles to hear him."—From an actual view of the treatment of the Slaves in North America, Mr. Whitfield remonstrated on that subject, in a letter from Georgia, to the inhabitants of Maryland, Virginia, and North and South Carolina, printed

washer-woman, in Bridgetown; and I occasionally employed the father as a porter, and the daughter to go on little errands. They were very obliging, honest people, and the man was one of the quietest and most inoffensive men I ever knew, black or white. They "worked out" as it is called, that is, found employment for themselves, and gave their owner a certain proportion of their earnings. This is an *illegal* practice; but it is very general, notwithstanding.

in

in 1739. As this letter is not every day to be met with, and has no reference to the *West Indian* Slavery, I may be permitted, without offence to that class of my readers, to offer them the following extract.

“As I lately passed through your Provinces (says Mr. Whitfield) I was sensibly touched with a fellow-feeling of the miseries of the poor Negroes. Whether it be lawful for Christians to buy Slaves, and thereby encourage the nations from whom they are bought, to be at perpetual war with each other, I shall not take upon me to determine. Sure I am, it is sinful, when bought, to use them as bad, nay worse than if they were brutes; and, whatever particular exceptions there may be (as I would charitably hope there are some) I fear the generality of you that own Negroes, are liable to such a charge; for your Slaves, I believe, work as hard, if not harder than the horses whereon you ride. These, after they have done their work, are fed and taken proper care of; but many Negroes, when wearied with labour, in your plantations, have been obliged to grind their own corn, after they return home. Your dogs are caressed and fondled at your tables; but your Slaves, who are frequently styled dogs or beasts, have not an equal privilege. They are scarcely permitted to pick up the crumbs which fall from their masters’ tables—not to mention what numbers have been given up to the inhuman usage of *cruel task-masters*, who, by their unrelenting scourges, have ‘ploughed their backs, and made long furrows,’ and at length brought them to the grave!

“When, passing along, I have viewed your plantations cleared and cultivated, many spacious houses built, and the owners of them faring sumptuously every day, my blood has frequently almost run cold within me, to consider how many of your Slaves had neither convenient food to eat, nor proper raiment to put on, notwithstanding most of the comforts you enjoy are **SOLELY** owing to *their indefatigable labours*!!

“The Scripture says, ‘*Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn.*’ Does God care for oxen? and will he not also take care of the Negroes? Undoubtedly he will—‘Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for the miseries that shall come upon you: *Behold the provision of the poor Negroes, who have reaped down your fields, which is by you denied them, CRIETH; and the cries of them which*

*which have reaped, are entered into the ears of the LORD of SABAOTH!!*" See St. James, ch. v. ver. 4.

"We have a remarkable instance of God's taking cognizance of, ~~and~~ avenging the quarrel of poor Slaves. 'There was a famine, in the days of David, three years, year after year. And David inquired of the Lord: and the Lord answered, It is for Saul, and for his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites.' 2 Sam. ch. xxi. ver. 1. Two things are here very remarkable: First, these *Gibeonites* were only 'hewers of wood and drawers of water,' or in other words, *Slaves* like yours. Secondly, that this plague was sent by God many years after the injury, the cause of the plague, was committed. And for what end were this and such like examples recorded in the holy Scriptures?—Without doubt for our learning; for God is the same to-day as he was yesterday, and will continue the same for ever. HE does not reject the prayer of the poor and destitute; nor disregard the cry of the meanest Negro. The blood of them, spilt for these many years, in your respective provinces, will ascend up to heaven against you!!" Thus far Mr. Whitfield.

It is worthy of observation that the Assembly of Virginia, in petitioning the Throne, as they did in 1772, for the abolition of the African Slave-trade, described that traffic, as endangering the very existence of His Majesty's dominions in America!!

The venerable and disinterested John Wesley's Thoughts on Slavery, are probably better known than the remonstrance of his friend Mr. Whitfield; for a *fourth* edition of the former, printed at Dublin in 1775, is now before me; so that any extracts would be unnecessary, even if there were room for them. Mr. Wesley *also* collected his knowledge of this subject personally, in the Southern Colonies (now States) of America; and perhaps in no piece of the same size (only 12 pages close 12mo) are the arguments, as they are called, in favour of Slavery, so briefly and ably refuted. Every word is weighty.

The treatment of the Slaves in the Southern States of America, appears to have been but little, if at all, improved, since the above eminent men so nobly pleaded their cause. See a pamphlet entitled Remarks on the Slavery of the Black People, addressed to the Citizens of the United States, by John Parrish, printed at Philadelphia in 1806; also

also Travels in some Parts of North America, in the Years 1804, 5 and 6, by Robert Sutcliffe, printed at York, in England, 1811, *ferè passim*. The authors of these last interesting performances, are of the praiseworthy Society called Quakers;—a society which, with all its characteristic humility, had the *true* honour of preceding all others, in this great cause.

No. X. NOTE on Pages 96 and 97.

“*The Rural Dean and other writers who are exciting the popular clamour in England,*” &c.] The Rev. R. B. Nickolls, Dean of Middleham in Yorkshire, a native of Barbadoes, is the only abolitionist here *personally* attacked, by Mr. H. and Mr. F. whom Mr. Steele has very properly made to speak the language of their party. But one may ask, What rational motive that respectable clergyman could have to calumniate the island which gave him birth? How he, writing in Yorkshire (See his Letter, p. 13, edition 4.) was to know that a certain book had been sent to certain men and societies in London, &c.? Or even if he had *read* it, How this would have altered his facts? Was he to “love his country better than truth?” *Obsequium amicos, veritas odium parit*. Thoughtless people are apt to swallow the *obsequium* of their flatterers, and to fling the *odium* at their best friends. The man who dares to tell all the truth of *any* country, is sure to excite the spleen of all its little parish patriots. Even in Scotland (*Salve, magna Parens!*) comparatively enlightened and virtuous as it is, or *was*, before manufactures and *whisky* became so general, some folks were highly offended at Dr. Johnson for saying, in 1773, that he met with few trees there. But when he said that, about Montrose, the land was so generally covered with grain, that it was not easy to see where they got fodder for the cattle;—when he said this, it was not objected to. No: this was erring on the *safe side*. Sensible men, however, saw that the true way to answer the learned tourist, was not to rail but to plant; so that North Britain probably owes whole forests to Johnson’s friendly remark. And sure I am, that every true patriot, in that country, would have thanked him, had he extended his remarks, or even his sarcasms, to some other wrong things—mere peccadilloes, however, thanks be to God, compared with the practice of Slavery! If the West Indians would think and act thus, they might  
soon

soon defy the "malevolence" of abolitionists. For the chains of Slavery might be even *gradually* relaxed (and no sensible abolitionist wishes for more) much sooner than an acorn can become an oak.—With regard to "the honour of Barbadoes," the feelings of Dean Nickolls were probably as correct as those of his critics, and far more usefully directed. For my own part, I did publicly express my hope, \*five-and-twenty years ago, that the just and lively sentiments of the inhabitants on that head, would have produced far greater effects than any which I have yet heard of. Their "*uncommon* caution and deliberation" in improving their Slave-system, do not appear to accord so well as could be wished, with that superiority over the junior colonies which Barbadoes is entitled to claim; particularly on the score of *comparative* humanity to Slaves. The praises of their real and *absolute* humanity, I fear, must be left for the theme of writers yet unborn!

#### No. XI. NOTE on Page 124.

"*Saving of 426*l.* per annum,*" &c.] In the valuable Report of the Committee on the commercial State of the W. India Colonies, July 1807, there are detailed accounts of the expences, in 1806, of eight Sugar plantations, in two adjoining parishes in Jamaica.

On the first plantation there mentioned, the expence of maintaining its 300 Slaves, of all descriptions, exclusive of the Negro-tax, but including medicines and medical attendance, in 1806, was, in Jamaica or Barbadoes currency, 40 per cent. worse than sterling, - £1576

Wages paid by Mr. Steele to his 500 Slaves, over and above land (which could be easily furnished in Jamaica, where two-thirds of each plantation, on an average, remain in wood and pasture, Edwards, vol. 1. p. 186.) - - - 1282

So that, by Mr. Steele's practice, there would have been saved, - - - Curr. £294

In the account of this plantation, the costs of provisions, clothing, &c. are all separately specified, except the mercantile charges, the proportion of which, on the articles imported for the Slaves, I make 90*l.* In the other accounts; the articles for the Slaves, both Jamaican and British, are



are more or less blended with other things; but I have proportioned them as well as I could, and have reduced all the gangs to 300 Slaves. It appears then that, by Mr. Steele's practice, there would have been, in the year 1806,

					Curr.
On the 1st plantation, a saving of	-	-	-	-	294
On the 2d do. do.	-	-	-	-	176
On the 3d do. do.	-	-	-	-	306
On the 4th do. do.	-	-	-	-	240
On the 5th do. do.	-	-	-	-	408
On the 6th do. do.	-	-	-	-	588
On the 7th do. do.	-	-	-	-	450
On the 8th do. do.	-	-	-	-	476

On each of the eight plantation, an average saving  
of, 262*l.* sterling, or - - - Curr. £ 367

On the whole eight plantations, there were 2220 Slaves (being exactly equal to the complement of ten Sugar plantations, by the average for all Jamaica, stated in the Inquiry, &c. p. 46.) and their maintenance, in 1806, cost 8795*l.*, being 3*l.* 19*s.* 3½*d.* sterl. or 5*l.* 11*s.* curr. for each; which wants 3*s.* of Mr. Steele's annual estimate, given page 122 above.

Before I made these calculations, I did suppose that the present expence of maintaining the Slaves, and therefore the savings, by adopting Mr. Steele's plan, would have all exceeded his saving of 496*l.* curr. especially considering that, by p. 3. of the Report before me, the expences in Jamaica appear to exceed those in the other islands; and that a great rise has taken place on all supplies, since he wrote. It is well known, however, that expences differ very greatly even on different plantations, and on the same plantation in different years; from soil, situation, seasons, the varying prices of the supplies, the gangs requiring more or less help from jobbers, &c. not to mention that some planters are more liberal in their supplies than others, and can afford them better. No doubt the money-wages would also vary. But considering that when Mr. Steele wrote, a bit per day (say 3*s.* sterl. per week) was very sufficient diet-money, in Barbadoes, for a hard working black mechanic, and half a bit for a half idle town domestic (both without land, but the former getting Sunday jobs, and the latter scraps about the house) I say considering these facts, I am inclined to think that, with the portions of good land, and the time, allowed by Mr.

Mr. Steele, his money-wages would still be sufficient, or nearly so.—Corn used to vary in Barbadoes, from 3 or 4 to 15 or 16 pints for a bit; the average being much more than any man could eat in a day; and other things varied in proportion. But a labourer has to provide clothes and many other things, beside corn, for himself and his family; though corn would, no doubt, be a better standard of wages than money, in almost every case, and every country.

N. B.—Mr. Steele tells us, at p. 11 above, that his Slaves, *when paid*, did all his holling for less than a fourth part of the 3*l.* curr. per acre which it had cost him *before they were paid*. Here then was an additional saving of 45*s.* the acre on at least 100 acres which he probably planted annually with his 338 Slaves old and young: (see pp. 170 and 181 above) that is, an additional saving of at least 225*l.* curr. So that *Mr. Steele's annual saving appears to have been not barely 426*l.* curr. as his moderation induced him to state, at p. 124 above; but 651*l.* curr. or 465*l.* sterling!* I have drawn no inference from this last sum, which appears to have been his real yearly saving; but it is quite proper to notice it, and even to *insist* on it, if necessary; and to proportion accordingly, the savings which Mr. Steele's practice would have produced, on the foregoing estates.—Mr. S. also saved the wages of the Negro-drivers (see p. 9.) and the everlasting plague and expence of recovering runaways.

## No. XII. NOTE on Page 154.

*“It too frequently happens that when the Slaves of such people”* (viz. those who have no land) *“are past their labour, they are abandoned by their owners, both to want and to disease, without relief or remedy; as the law affords none; or if it did, while the Negro is no evidence, in any case whatsoever, against White persons, such a law would be nugatory.”*] Mr. Steele was not aware that, in 1785, some years before he wrote this, the legislature of Barbadoes passed

*“An Act to prevent distempered and worn-out Negroes from infesting the towns, streets, and highways, in this island.”* The preamble states that,

*“Whereas it has, for some time past, been the cruel practice of sane persons possessing Negroes who, from old*  
age

age and infirmities, are incapable of further service to their inhuman owners, to drive them from their plantations to beg, steal or starve; which said unhappy objects are daily infesting the public streets of the several towns in this island, greatly to the annoyance and nuisance of the inhabitants thereof:

“To prevent such inhuman practices, for the future, so disgraceful and dangerous to the country, be it enacted,” &c. that an owner suffering any distempered, maimed or worn-out Negro to infest the towns, shall remove the same, or forfeit 5*l.* curr. The Justice to cause the Slave to be conveyed to the owner’s habitation, and the expence to be paid out of the penalty; one-third of the overplus to the constable, and the rest to the public. Failing his goods, &c. the offender to be imprisoned, not exceeding two months. See the Privy Council’s Report, p. 548.

N. B. The wretched subjects of this law are to be conveyed to the habitations of those very owners who had before “driven them from their plantations to beg, steal or starve!”—A hospital “for the reception of disabled Slaves, abandoned by their owners, was *in contemplation*,” in Jamaica five-and-twenty years ago; when I ventured to observe, that “such hospitals would be built, over all the W. Indies, and endowed, and well managed, and fully adequate to their end,—when Slavery should change its nature!” Letters on Slavery, p. 135.

Dr. Pinckard, in his Notes on the W. Indies, printed in 1806, vol. 2. p. 109, says, that, “very much to the discredit of Barbadoes, numbers of old, diseased, decrepid Negroes, at once objects of compassion and of horror, are seen lying at the corners, or begging about the streets. The law *should* compel every master to provide for his own Slaves.”

Thus the Doctor appears not to have known, any more than Mr. Steele, that the above law existed; and how should he, when it lay totally dormant, or rather dead, among the records of the island? When it was enacted, Mr. S. was not a member of the legislature, and lived at a distance from the town; and Dr. P. was only a visitor. But I, who resided in Bridgetown when this law was made, never saw or heard of it, till it appeared in the P. C. Report, in 1789; or observed, at the time, any abatement of the disgraceful practice against which it was made and provided.

provided. Accordingly, at p. 34 of Letters on Slavery, I stated what I had to say on the subject, without referring to the above-cited law; and for this good reason, that, though not inattentive to such things, I did not know that there was any such law.

But Mr. Steele, though not aware that "the law afforded any relief or remedy" against the cruel practice in question, added, with perfect correctness, that "if it did, while the Negro is no evidence, in any case whatsoever, against white persons, such a law would be nugatory." On this very ground it was, that I pronounced the inefficiency of the parallel clause of the boasted consolidated Slave-law of Jamaica, as stated in p. 135 of the book last quoted; and it is remarkable that, in the very next sheet of that book, I had to insert a proof that my opinion was just.

The makers of the above Barbadoes law, modestly confine the practice, against which they framed it, to "*some time past*." But I can answer for that practice having previously existed for twelve years; and we may venture to suppose that it has *always* more or less accompanied Slavery; of which it is an immediate consequence. Don Quixote says to the young page who was going to enlist,—  
 "Mark, child! it is better for a soldier to smell of his gunpowder than of civet. And when old age comes upon you, in this honourable exercise, though you be full of scars, maimed or lame, at least you shall not be without honour, which poverty cannot diminish. And besides, there is order taken now, that old and maimed soldiers may be relieved; neither are they to be dealt withal *like those men's Negroes that, when they are old and can do their masters no service, they (under colour of making them free) turn them out of doors, and make them Slaves to hunger, from which nothing can free them but death.*" Blount's Translation of Don Quixote, printed in 1672, p. 181.

#### No. XIII. NOTE on Page 196.

"The labour of Slaves—dearer ~~than~~ that of Freemen."]  
 On this subject see, among the ancients, Columel. Præfatio; Plin. Hist. Nat. xviii. 3;—among the moderns, Rollin, Hist. of Arts and Sciences, vol. 1; M. Poyvre, Observ. &c. p. 102; Franklin's Ess. on peopling Countries; Tucker's Dispute between G. Br. and Irel. p. 13; Smith's Wealth  
 2 G of

of Nations, vol. 2. p. 87, vol. 3. p. 37; Young's Annals of Agriculture; Morse's Amer. Geogr. Edin. edit. p. 79; Gaisford's late Essay, p. 84; and, to name no more, my lamented friend Dr. Beattie, in the 2d vol. of his Elem. of Moral Science; where he has given a very interesting abstract of the doctrines on Slavery which he told me, in 1792, he had been publicly inculcating in his class, for thirty years; an example, I humbly conceive, worthy of the imitation of every Professor of Moral Philosophy, Law and Divinity, throughout the United Kingdom.—I must, however, additionally refer to an excellent pamphlet entitled Observations on Slavery (published in 1788, and now out of print) by my late worthy friend Dr. James Anderson, who shows, that the labour of a W. Indian Slave costs about thrice as much as it would cost, if executed by a freeman. Taking another case, he demonstrates that the labour of certain colliers in Scotland who, till our own times, were subjected to a mild kind of vassalage, regulated by law, was twice as dear as that of the freemen who wrought other coal-mines in the same country, and thrice as dear as common day-labour. Almost the first words which that able political and rural œconomist spoke to me, when I was introduced to him, at Edinburgh, above 20 years ago, were "Thanks be to God, sir, your West Indian Slavery never can prevail in this country: no production of our labour could bear the expence." I told him, that, on an average of years and plantations, the W. Indian productions were also unequal to that expence; but that individuals still made money by purchasing plantations for half their value, or even much less, in bad years, and consequently getting great profits, on the return of good years, &c. &c. The bare facts were sufficient for such men as Beattie and Anderson. Their own enlightened minds supplied the reasonings, and produced almost immediate conviction.

#### No. XIV. NOTE on Page 197 a.

"Attempts—to introduce Slaves, in defiance of the Abolition Laws," &c.] It is impossible for the African Institution to be too vigilant and active in detecting and bringing to justice the violators of those laws. The Council and Assembly of Jamaica (see Edwards, vol. 2. p. 493) consider

sider the prevention of the clandestine introduction of New Negroes into that island, as next to impossible. Lord Sheffield (On the Slave-trade, p. 12) holds the same opinion; adding that, though it was *felony* to import Negroes from the British islands into the French, yet that it was daily and constantly done. His Lordship's opinion is abundantly justified by Oldmixon, vol. 2. p. 420, and D'Auberteuil, tom 1. p. 282.

The Law of Barbadoes, No. 159, Hall's edit. passed in 1727, makes it felony without benefit of clergy, both to principals and accessories, with forfeiture of vessel and cargo, to carry off fraudulently any Slave without a ticket; "a great number of persons making it a trade." Under this law, two Frenchmen received sentence of death, at the Barbadoes Grand Sessions in June 1736; as did one Joseph Ashton, at the Dec. Grand Sessions of the same year. The Frenchmen were pardoned by his Honour the President, on account of the particular circumstances of their case; but whether Ashton was pardoned or executed, does not appear. Caribbeana, vol. 2. p. 173. In my time, I think A. D. 1784, one A. . . r narrowly escaped the gallows, under the same Act; and several more were strongly suspected of having incurred its penalties. Indeed the practice of smuggling away Negroes, in defiance of death and confiscation, was perfectly notorious; and I could name more than one man who was generally understood to "make it a trade;" and that to a considerable extent: and a lucrative trade it undoubtedly was, to buy Slaves from insolvent debtors in our islands, for perhaps half their value, and sell them, in a few days, to the French for their full value.—At the Grand Sessions of Charleston, S. Carolina, 25 May 1809, James Hutton was *fin*ed in fifty pounds for *murdering* a Negro; and George Burrows and Robert Welch, convicted of *stealing* Negroes, were ordered to be *hanged* on the 23d of June!!—These things are not mentioned as specimens of *transatlantic* justice; but merely to show what vigour and vigilance will be necessary to enforce the Abolition laws of this country.

I know not whether I should allude, on the same page with such characters, to a planter of worth and humanity, a scholar and a mathematician, who was forced by a malicious and tyrannical creditor, to withdraw privately from a certain colony, with all the Slaves on his sugar plantation.

It was said that the people, though they and their forefathers had lived with him and his forefathers on the estate, from the early days of the colony, followed the fortunes of "poor Massa," without a murmur. This irregular act was attended with so many extenuating circumstances, most of which I have forgotten, that it was not violently blamed even by the most respectable and honest people.—I see it belongs not properly to this place. It is rather an example of the evil effects of the present Laws of Extent, both to Proprietors and Slaves. Attach the Slaves to the soil, and most of those evils would vanish.

#### No. XV. NOTE on Page 197 b.

"*Slaves—procured in great numbers from several sources purely W. Indian.*" &c.] The Slaves settled on plantations, have not to blame the colonial laws alone, for their sufferings from being seized for their Owners' debts, imprisoned and sold, in the cruel manner stated at p. 208. For, by the British statute, 5 Geo. II. c. 7. Slaves are made chattels for the payment of debts; and, by 13 Geo. III. c. 14, they may be mortgaged, as free-hold, even to foreigners. This last Act, I believe, was made to enable the unfortunate settlers of the Ceded Islands to borrow money in Holland, when they could no longer obtain it in this country. It is now generally agreed that all such laws should be repealed, and the Slaves attached to the soil; so as to be transferable *only* with it. See Long, vol. 1. p. 399, and vol. 2. p. 499; Edwards, vol. 2. p. 149; P. C. Report, p. 476; Suppl. to the same, p. 17.

The reader will judge of the extent of this single W. Indian source of purchase, when he is told that, in Jamaica, in 20 years ending in 1791, no fewer than 177 sugar plantations were sold for debt, 92 seized by mortgagees, and 55 abandoned altogether. See Proceed. of Jamaica Assem. in 1792, Append. No. 12. This implies the sale, transfer, or violent removal of the Slaves on 324 sugar plantations, or of 71,928 Slaves (reckoning 222 to each plantation, according to Inquiry, &c. p. 46) in twenty years, or of nearly 3,600 Slaves annually;—many of them sold, with as little regard to their feelings and natural attachments, as if they were brute beasts. All this is on sugar plantations, in Jamaica alone. But, if we include all sorts

sorts of plantations, in all the islands, it will be moderate to estimate the number of field Slaves sold, transferred, and violently removed, at 10,000 annually:

As to the *idlers*, Mr. Long, vol. 2. p. 281, says, that “from 20 to 40 house-servants is nothing unusual,” in Jamaica. According to Mr. Edwards, vol. 1. p. 213, there are in Kingston two black domestics to every white person, old and young, rich and poor; after allowing largely for mechanics, porters, &c. and excluding free people of colour. In Barbadoes, by Report of the Commit. of Assem. 1788, p. 7. “about one fourth of the whole number of Slaves, are employed in menial services, &c.” The *et cætera* applies to the mechanics and others, not employed in cultivation. But the great majority of this “fourth” were certainly domestics. In the towns, indeed, the numbers, idleness and vice of this class, amount to a grievous public nuisance. I could name a maiden lady, and a widow in a certain town, who severally retained above 50 of those idlers, and an elderly widower, in another town, who had as many. Mr. Burke condemns this “custom of multiplying household Slaves (infinitely the most dangerous) far beyond reason and necessity.” Europ. Settl. vol. 2. p. 126 Dublin edition. But we need not dwell on the *obvious* danger of such crowds of domestic Slaves daily inspecting, and sometimes despising the conduct, and too often hating the persons, of their Owners. We merely mention those idlers as forming a copious source of the *West Indian* Slave-trade; as well as of labour to those planters whose field gangs want, or are supposed to want help.—The extent of the other W. Indian sources of Slave-dealing, mentioned in the text, we have not the means of estimating.

#### No. XVI. NOTE on Pages 204, 207.

“*Specific evidence—on the period of labour fulfilled by purchased Slaves,*” &c.] The time for which a purchased Slave ought to labour, in order to indemnify his owner, can be exactly calculated from the given capital, annual return, and rate of compound interest. But the time he *actually* does labour, is a *fact* which can only be estimated, on probable grounds, by information and evidence.



As the present method of calculation was not thought of, when the witnesses were examined, no specific question on this important point, was put to them. Some of them however mentioned it incidentally; and they, together with several authors of credit, have stated the average period of labour fulfilled by Field Slaves, *bought and bred*,

	Years.
In Barbadoes, by p. 32 of Suppl. to P. C. Report, at ————— (by p. 15 of Nickolls's Letter, on <i>one</i> estate 4 years)	- 7½
In Jamaica, by p. 59, No. 4, Abridg. Evid. before H. of Commons	- 7
—————, by p. 118, Ditto Ditto	- 7
In the British Sugar islands at large, by a MS. book in my possession, of the late ingenious H. Smeathman, Esq *	- 7½
The average of these two periods of actual labour (namely 7 and 7½ years) is seven years and a quarter.	

In the following authorities, all the Slaves, without distinction, or a number equal to them, are understood to die off, and to be renewed, (partly by *importations*, and partly by *births*) at the respective periods annexed:

In Barbadoes, by P. C. Report, p. 768, in	-	Years. 14
————— by Burke's Europ. Settl. vol. 2. p. 121, Dublin ed. in	-	16
————— by p. 86 of Africanus's Letters, by the Rev. Mr. Leigh, in	-	16
————— by Wynne's Brit. Emp. in Amer. vol. 2. p. 543, in	-	15
————— by Comaunt, of Barbadoes, Soc. of Arts, p. 106, compared with p. 121 foregoing, in	-	15
In Leeward islands, by Robertson's Detection, p. 44, in	-	15
————— ("Sometimes," <i>id. ibid.</i> in 7 years.)		
————— (by Rev. Mr. Newton's Thoughts, p. 21, on "several estates" in 9 years.)		

\* As Mr. Smeathman's words cannot be referred to in print, it seems but right to subjoin them.—"Many of the planters will say, Let me but get seven or eight years tight work out of a Slave, and I do not care what the d—l becomes of him afterwards." Mr. Smeathman's opportunities of *personal* observation were very good. In 1775, 6 and 7, he visited several of the islands, British and foreign, with a view to check the ravages of the ants and other insects, and lived chiefly on sugar plantations. He had previously studied Natural History, particularly Entomology, with great care, both in Europe and Africa. His papers, partly in my possession, prove him to have been a person of indefatigable industry, and of manly firmness and sympathy on a subject not altogether foreign to the present. His and my late venerable friend, Drew Drury, Esq. spoke highly of his moral character, which still lives in the warm remembrance of our common friend John Hethcote, Esq. Mr. Drury began an account of Smeathman's life, but was obliged to discontinue it, partly by age and infirmity, and partly by want of materials. I know of nothing of Mr. S's in print, except his curious paper on the African *Termes* (a species of wood-ants, or bug-a-bugs) in the 71st vol. of the Phil. Trans. and his detailed Plan for colonizing the Coast of Africa;—the first, I believe, ever published; as the excellent Granville Sharp, Esq. was the first man in this country, who ever attempted to carry such a plan into execution; and chiefly at his own expence.

In Dominica, by a pamphlet entitled No Abolition, p. 25, "in much less than 15 years"—say	-	14
In all the British Sugar islands, by p. 87 of Gairford's Essay printed 1811, in his own opinion in	-	14
by Do quoting P. C. Report, in	-	16
But I can only find, p. 40,	-	15
(by Anderson on Slavery, p. 9, supposed in 10 years)	-	
In S. Domingo, by D Auberteuil, tom. 1. pp 54, 69	-	15
The average of these three periods of renewal (14, 15 and 16 years) is fifteen years.		

There is no selection of authorities, to serve a turn, here (or indeed any where else in these papers) for these are *all* that I can find on this head, after a very long and painful search. Of those embraced in parentheses, the first three have only a partial application, and the last is merely conjectural; though even the conjectures of such a man as the late Dr. Anderson merit attention. He conjectured, because he had not (in 1788) any authentic grounds of information. It were to be wished that what has since appeared, were more full on the point in question. But one thing is clear (and it happens to be all that we really want) that if field Slaves, *bought* and *bred*, do not, in the opinion of practical planters, fulfil more than 7 or 8 years of labour; and if they all die off, and are renewed in about 15 years;—if these, I say, be commonly reputed facts among practical planters, then are we perfectly safe in concluding that the labouring lives of *bought* Field-Slaves (to which labouring lives *alone*, our inquiry has been directed) exceed not *seven* years in the gross. But if we duly allow for the circumstances stated in the text, and following in this note, the *clear* period of actual effective labour, cannot be nearly so much. To any one who thinks he can *prove* it to be more, I would say, without hesitation,

*Dic—et eris mihi magnus Apollo.*

If an equal number of the Slaves were to die off yearly, till, in about 15 years, they all died off, then the mean period of their lives would be exactly  $7\frac{1}{2}$  years; and, as the case stands, this is the only mean period we can derive from the second set of authorities. It may be said, that this but little exceeds  $7\frac{1}{4}$  years, the mean period of actual labour deduced, in the same way, from the first set of authorities. But this is not my fault. I have taken the authorities as I found them; and, all things considered, they agree very well with the matter of fact. For the near equality of the periods of labour and of life, which they indicate,

indicate, it would be easy, though not very agreeable, to account; but I shall only make use of it to show that the former has been assumed too high at seven years. For,

1st. The *Africans* are from 14 to 40, and even 50 years of age, before ever they see the W. Indies\*, and the *bought W. Indians*, having been pinched and “hard driven” by their distressed owners, before they are brought to sale, have, of course, a very small proportion of children and young people; and are themselves debilitated, *before* their sale, by imprisonment, perhaps for several months, and many of them heart-broken *by* a sale not to be distinguished from that of so many cattle.

2dly. In the three *unproductive* years of seasoning, 2 out of every 5 Africans bought, *die*, and the 14 years they *should* have fulfilled are thereby taken from the (5 times 7 or) 35 years of labour supposed to be fulfilled by the whole five; leaving 21 years of labour to be performed by the 3 survivors, in the 4 years remaining of the 7 after the seasoning; which is so very absurd, that one can hardly find words to express it intelligibly. A similar argument applies to the bought W. Indians; who also undergo a destructive seasoning, before they are reconciled to the loss of their homes and their relations, and to the new estates, and often new islands, to which they are transferred.

3dly. The period of actual labour, be it what it may, is very greatly reduced by sickness and desertion; which, as far as I know, were never properly stated and allowed for, till it was attempted at p. 434 above.

4thly. According to Sir Isaac Newton†, mankind in general die off and are renewed, every 33 or 34 years. But the Slaves collectively, *bought* and *bred*, die off and are renewed, in about 15 years, and therefore more than twice as fast as the rest of the species, and the *bought* alone, four or five times as fast; from what has been stated here, and in the text.

5thly. We have seen, at p. 203 above, that the *prime* average period of a labourer's life, in London, and of a soldier's service in the British army, exceeds not ten years; and that the latter exceeds not seven years, if the soldier, after being seasoned, serve in the W. Indies.

But, though perfectly aware of the inferences we are en-

\* See P. C. Report, pp 22, 36, 40, 42.

† Chronology, p. 56. French Translation. We might quote authorities more favourable to our argument; but none so respectable.

titled to draw, from these and similar facts, omitted for brevity, yet we allow the planter to get seven years of effective hard labour, from every Slave he *buys*; in order to secure our calculations from all reasonable objection. And this we can very well afford to do; seeing we have proved, at p. 232, that even this over-rated allowance, and the highest return, or labour-annuity, on record, will not save planters who depend chiefly on purchase, from utter ruin, in a few years.—And yet planters there are, who want to make their fortunes, or to mend them, by the labour of the death-struck inmates of slave-ships and “ruinated plantations”!! Surely history records not such another instance of that kind of infatuation, which is often implied in the Holy Scriptures, and called by our good old Divines “judicial blindness;”—blindness inflicted as a judgment by the AVENGER of the wrongs of the oppressed; who knows how to make the transgressors of his Laws the instruments of their own punishment, without violating their liberty.

#### No. XVII. NOTE on Page 218.

“Average return, or rather labour annuity, of not quite 4 and 3-8ths per cent.” &c.] What the West Indian accountants are apt to call the “clear returns, or clear profits,” of plantations, are often nothing more than what we, with submission to better judges, distinguish by the name of “labour-annuities,” as depending on the labouring lives of the Slaves. In the *single* case of the Slaves constantly keeping up, or rather increasing their numbers by the births, are those returns entitled to the name of clear profits. I say rather increasing; it being plain that an estate barely keeping up its gang, is constantly exposed to depopulation by epidemics, famine, hurricane, &c. This has been already observed; but can hardly be too often inculcated on improvident, or those commonly called dashing planters.

The following is the best account I have been able to collect of those labour-annuities, or clear profits, as the case may be, for 40 years, ending in 1807.

1. In 1768, Mr. Frere\* said that “the landed interest of Barbadoes, does not neat annually 4 per cent.”

\* Short History of Barbadoes, p. 116.

2. In 1774, Mr. Long † stated the returns of sugar plantations, in Jamaica, according to circumstances, at  $1\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $3\frac{1}{2}$ , and 10 per cent, and he calls "8 per cent. a saving profit."

3. In 1789, Mr. Steele, p. 114, above, says that a plantation in Barbadoes "should generally pay 8 per cent. on its whole value of land and perishable stock."

4. Same year, in the different islands, the returns are stated † at 3,  $3\frac{1}{2}$ , 4, 5, and 6 per cent.

5. In 1793, Mr. Edwards §, calculating on wood-land, bought, cleared and planted for half the average value of cultivated land in Jamaica ||, states the planter's "*clear profit, at seven per cent. on his capital, without charging, however, a shilling for making good the decrease of the Negroes, or for the wear and tear of the buildings, or making any allowance for dead capital*, and supposing too that the proprietor resides on the spot; for, if he is absent, he is subject, in Jamaica, to an annual tax of 6 per cent., on the gross value of his sugar and rum, for legal commissions to his agent."—Mr. E. also particularizes the items of expence, which "*demonstrate the fallacy of the too common mode of calculating, which supposes that the annual disbursements are provided for by the rum.*" Accordingly it has since appeared, that the British supplies and island expences amount, in Jamaica, to 20s. 10d. sterl. on each cwt. of sugar; and, in the other islands, to 19s. 6d. over and above the value of the rum ¶.

6. In 1807, by the valuable Report just quoted, the annual returns from Sugar plantations, in the different islands, are stated, in evidence, at 0 (*nothing*)  $1\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $2\frac{1}{2}$ , 3, 6 and 10 per cent. on the capital; on *one* plantation at 12 per cent. for 4 years ending in 1798, but since reduced to 3 per cent. and even lower.

Here then (excluding the *one* plantation, but including the case of *no* profit) are eleven different rates of annual returns, the average of which is somewhat more than  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. But if we deduct *only*  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., which is far too

† Hist of Jamaica, vol 1. p. 161, 521, 526; vol. 2. p. 491.

\* Answers to Query 5, in P. C. Report.

§ Hist. of the W. Indies, vol. 2. p. 257, 260

|| Compare Edwards, vol. 2 p. 251, with Long, vol. 2. p. 455, 458.

¶ See Report of the Committee on the commercial State of the W. India Colonies, July 1807, pp. 3, 19, 23, 96.

little for the charges omitted by Mr. Edwards \*, and thereby reduce his 7 per cent. to  $4\frac{1}{2}$ , the general average will be 4l. 7s. 3d., or not quite *four and three-eighths* per cent. *clear profit* to the *breeders*, and *labour-annuity* to the *buyers* of Slaves; for 40 years ending in 1807. And this  $4\frac{3}{8}$  per cent. being the average of all the other averages, is probably more applicable to the whole British property vested in Sugar plantations, than any one of them.

No. XVIII. See Page 286, &c.

“ I have many more documents† to offer on the use of the PLOUGH in both the Indies,” p. 302.]

First, In the WEST INDIES;

With Hints about Cattle, the making of Hay, &c.

“ *Ab Atatro accessitantur qui Consul-s fuerint.*” Cic. Orat. pro Ligaro.

1. From *An Essay upon Plantership*, &c. By Samuel Martin, senior, Esq. (called Colonel Martin of Antigua, P. C. Rep. 342; Edwards, vol. 2. pp. 218, 242) London 1773. This little work is said, by Mr. Turnbull in the preface to his Letters to a young Planter, to be the only work of the kind in the English language, and to be out of print. I never saw any other copy of it, than that which is now before me; or knew that it existed, till I read some extracts from it in the Encyclopædia Britannica, article *Plantership*. The author observes (p. 32.) that “ this little tract is not designed as a complete system of plantership, but only an essay towards farther improvements, and to reform the gross and common errors now in practice.”

\* At p. 11 of the Report last quoted, it is stated that “ 4 per cent. for wear and tear, plantation utensils the loss of Negroes, and the loss of stock, is but a moderate allowance.”

† Want of room obliges me to abridge the language of most of the following extracts; carefully retaining the sense, and even the words where the sense is very important. The articles are inserted in the order of their dates. Should any reader think some of them antiquated, or already sufficiently known, I would *at present* decline any other reply than referring him to the extracts from the late publications of Mr. Gasford, and Mr. Mathison, marked 11 and 12, below. For my own part, I can only say, that I never happened to see any one of the pieces here quoted, during my long residence in the W. Indies, though I read, and inquired after books as much as most people. The truth is, that some of them are extremely scarce; and on the whole, I am pretty certain that most of these extracts will be as new, as they are evidently important to the majority of my W. Indian readers.—W. D.

He who treats his Negroes kindly, says Col. Martin, will reap a much larger product, than the cruel task-master who starves them, or chastises them with undue severity. He who wishes to grow rich, must feed his Negroes well. Some of his *best* land should be allotted to each, in proportion to his family, and sufficient time to cultivate it. But as such allotment cannot, in long droughts, produce enough, it is the planter's duty to have always his stores filled with Guinea-corn, yams, &c. For plenty begets cheerfulness and strength; by which more work is done in a day, by the same hands, than in a week when they are enervated by want and severity. *Scanty meals of American corn may sustain life; but our own produce alone can impart vigour;* and I dare affirm that the former is as expensive, though much less wholesome and nutritious. It is therefore *lamentable to see the culture of provisions so generally neglected in our sugar colonies.* This, in my opinion, is one great cause of our general poverty; for, with scanty or unwholesome feeding, how can the Negroes labour, or crops be expected? Abundance of provisions, as well as canes, should therefore be planted; were it but to fructify the soil by *a change of crops.* Pages 3, 4, 5.

The Barbadoes planters, perhaps the most skilful of any, and exact calculators, are also the most careless of their cattle; as if the carriage of canes to the mill, or of produce to market, were not essential. Some are so ingeniously thrifty as to carry their canes on Negroes' heads, degrading human nature, and *opposing their own interest, which is best served by saving human labour.*

In crop, plenty of cane-tops may be had for the carriage. They will be improved if tedded like hay, and sweated in heaps a few days before being eaten. Ricks of cane-tops should be made in each field, with the butt ends inwards. They are very wholesome, if chopped into small parts, and sprinkled with salt water, or melasses and water. Yet the cattle require change of food, as Guinea corn, and a variety of grass, which all soils produce, with a little care, in moist weather. But in severe droughts, especially in these small islands, which have not large meadows for hay, our only resource is tedded cane-tops or Guinea-corn leaves, which I have experienced to be very nutritious, and may be preserved above a year, if well tedded for 3 or 4 days. Being tied into bundles, they must lie in the sun, for 3 or 4 days more,

more, before being ricked. The ricks should be about 30 feet long, 16 or 18 wide, and 7 high at the sides; thence sloping like a roof, the ridge of which must be well thatched. When this excellent fodder\* is used, the bundles must be taken down from the top at the west end; for the ricks must stand east and west, to secure them from wet and high winds. By this husbandry, cattle may be kept in strength in droughts, or in wet weather when grass is purgative; and thus the expence of "*large pastures may be totally saved.*" When Guinea corn is planted in May, to be cut in July, in order to bear seed that year, that cutting, properly tedded, makes excellent hay, which the cattle prefer to meadow-hay, as I have experienced. The after-crop of Guinea corn also furnishes abundance of that excellent provender, which keeps well in ricks for 2 or 3 years. Page 9.

The cattle should be shaded by trees, where fed in the heat of the day, if the soil require not dung; or by a flat shed over the pen, where confined for making it. That shade is necessary for cattle is apparent, from their leaving the finest pasture, for it, in the heat of the day; which is a strong instinctive argument for its necessity. But some men shut their eyes against this argument, and their own interest; for throughout all our islands, except in a few instances, *the cattle are exposed to the sun without mercy*; owing to a mistaken notion that shade prevents the making of much dung. But a flat shed, covered with cane-trash, lets through the rain and excludes the sun. This will do for cattle; but mules, after working, should be put into a warm stable. Turning them loose hot, destroys them by the glanders. Page 10.

Let the planter then be kind to men, and merciful to beasts; giving them plenty and variety of food, clear water, cool shade and a clean bed; bleeding them after long labours, currying them, affording them salt, &c. *protecting them from the flogging lash† of cruel drivers, who need nothing but a goad*; and proportioning their labour to their strength. The general management is in no one thing more defective than in this; for by pairing our cattle unequally, and by the drivers writhing them from right to left, they are

\* Wimpffen (p. 144) extols cane-tops, as fodder;—with salt no doubt.—The common English straw-cutter would quickly cut them small.—W. D.

† He might have added blows with the handles of the whips; and violent thrusts which often rupture lean cattle. The black drivers treat the poor animals as ill as they themselves are too often treated.—W. D.

needlessly



needlessly fatigued. Let us imitate the English farmer, who trains his cattle to an even draught, by putting a horse before them as a leader. Page 12. But if this be thought too expensive, let the Portuguese of Madeira be our pattern. Their scanty pasture renders their cattle very small, and yet a yoke of them will draw much more than a pair of our largest oxen, solely by preserving an equality of draught. This is done by boring gimblet-holes through their horns, within 2 inches of the points, and tying the horns of each pair, at 6 inches apart. Hence the pair are obliged to draw with united force. Page 13.

In stony or steep soils, where the plough cannot be used, or where sufficient cattle cannot be supported, hand-labour or hoe-ploughing must be substituted: but even then, much labour may be saved by spreading the dung in the English way, and digging it in. To evince this, against the present erroneous practice, let any planter compute his Negroes' labour in distributing dung by baskets, and in spreading it with dung-forks, and then judge which is the most profitable. But if some are so devoted to the old custom of dunging by baskets, instead of wheel-barrows, in level ground, or hand-barrows in uneven land, by which *thrice* the work may be done, in the same time, by the *same hands*; let them at least save much labour in putting out the dung, before the basket is used, as follows. Page 24.

In holing, leave a space after 80 holes, from the first interval, then the like space after the next 80 holes, and so on; these spaces running parallel to the intervals. Into these spaces the dung may be carted, even before it be rotten, at leisure times, and covered with mould or cane-trash; and in such quantity as will dung a breadth of 40 holes on each side of it; and only half that quantity on the outsides of the cane-piece. Thus the carts will bring the dung to within 40 holes at farthest, of where it is to be finally laid. Page 25.

A Dutch hoe which is pushed forward, and cuts the weeds a little below the surface, will do more at one shove, than three strokes of the common hoe. By the English horse-hoe, weeds between beans and peas are extirpated, with incredible expedition, all over Kent. It is drawn by one or two horses, and consists of two low wheels, on the same axis, from whence descend two triangular hoes, which cut the weeds an inch under the surface. By it, a man and a boy, with two horses or mules, can weed five acres

acres in a day, and it may be of admirable use in all our loose and dry soils. The beasts drawing in a line in the space, the wheels pass without injury, on the outside of each row of canes. Page 28.

Four Negro men, taught the dexterous use of the spade and dung-fork, will load a cart with earth or dung, in less time than *ten* women can with baskets, in the present way. Thus may the pennis be supplied with earth or marl, in dry weather, and great quantities of dung got ready to be spread and ploughed in, when moisture invites, without hindering the progress of the crop; provided the mould be distributed by wheel-barrows. For when carts cannot carry mould into the pennis, wheel-barrows may be used, "*to save intolerable labour in the use of baskets.*" Pages 35, 36.

A plantation is like a machine. If one part run too fast, or too slow, the end is defeated. It is vain to plead the want of hands or cattle; for these must be supplied, or the planter must contract his views; as attempting more than can be attained, will lead into disorder, and end in poverty. Page 37.

"The plough, I find by experience, in the *stiff* soils of this climate, is impracticable; because such soils are either too wet or too dry for the purpose; and it requires more strength of cattle and horses than our small pastures can sustain." [Yet see what has been above extracted from our author's 9th page.] "But all our *light* soils are ploughable at *any* season of the year, with a few draught beasts. Indeed if dung is laid out by carriages, as before advised, it will be a full employment for our cattle and mules, without the use of the plough\*." Page 38.

\* This paragraph, which is a foot-note, on Colonel Martin's 38th page, I give in his express word; as it is remarkable for being the only passage in the whole body of information and evidence before me, in which the scantiness of pasture, and the hardness of (some) land are mentioned, as interrupting the plough. But the Colonel's property was situated in Antigua, the hottest and driest of all the islands; destitute of fresh springs, and sometimes of rain for years together. Hence Mr. Edwards, vol. 1. p. 447, states, that "in the years 1770, 1773 and 1778, there were no crops of any kind in Antigua." Thus the objection to the plough from the insufficiency of pasture, applies with its greatest force to Antigua; and yet even there, our author tells us that "all the light soils are ploughable at any season of the year." As to the stiff soils, if not ploughable in Antigua, they certainly are elsewhere. "The best cane-land in Jamaica," says Mr. Mathison, p. 37, "is of a strong tenacious quality, and the surface of it, in dry weather, acquires the hardness of a brick." Yet this does not prevent its being ploughed; though not so easily as freer soils. For he adds, p. 38. "The strength and texture

If, instead of "*scraping up the weeds with common hoes,*" as now practised, the planter would employ the *Kentish hoe plough* (where the soil is not too stiff, or stony) "*infinite hard labour might be saved.*" Page 40.

*Manure* and cultivate your lands well, and you will prevent the blast; especially if, according to the English mode, *the crops are changed*, by planting in dry soils, potatoes, yams, or corn; and, in stiff, eddoes or potatoes: for hence the planter, with natural seasons, may be sure of canes that will reward his labour. Page 41.

2. *From Mr. Long's History of Jamaica*, printed, London 1774, Book 2. Chap. 3.

*Plough.*—In agriculture, one successful attempt has more weight than any argument. New operations appear enveloped in difficulty, to the majority of men, who tremble to leave the beaten track. The risk seems great, and the benefit uncertain. Every one cannot weigh impartially any proposed improvement, penetrate at once into its practicability; compare the expence with the benefit; and, when resolved, persevere with steadiness. But men determined to conquer difficulties, not to create them, are prepared for any that may happen, and generally succeed. Such experiments imply little hazard, as pieces of land may be set apart for them; whether as to manuring or planting by the plough, in close or wide rows. Thus might any new method be decided on, without material loss.

*The high price of Negroes with other considerations, should move planters to try every expedient to abridge their labour.* If a plough could do the work of 100 Negroes, this is the strongest reason for using it, wherever practicable; because "*no work is so detrimental to them as holing.*" A plough may very well be followed in Jamaica, from 6 to 10, *a. m.* and from 4 to 6, *p. m.* by a white man. But ~~as~~ the plough has been found to answer in Jamaica, it wants no argument to recommend it.

texture of my land is such as to require eight oxen, working in the yoke, with careful management, to plough three quarters of an acre six inches deep, in about eight hours; the work going on half the time, during the early part of the day, being discontinued from 11 to 3, and renewed again, with fresh oxen, in the cool of the evening." Yet, three quarters of an acre is considerably more than thirty Negroes could hole in eight hours, when the land is so excessively indurated.—W. D.

Some

Some land was ploughed in Clarendon parish, and left to lie some time, before it was holed; which the Negroes found very easy. Before the ploughing, it was spread with manure, and it yielded near 3 hhd. per acre of fine sugar, or one hhd. more than it had yielded by the common mode. Canes were afterwards planted, with great dispatch, in the furrow, after the plough; the land not having been cut too deep, nor the ridges left too wide; which prevented the canes from rotting, as the water could not lie, while the trenches, or drains, were kept open. The ridges were cast about 12 feet wide; but some ground may require cross trenches. What is called level ground, often has depressions, where, for want of cross cuts, the water lodges. One plough turned up as much land in a day, and much better than 100 Negroes\* could with hoes. The bottoms of the furrows being even, the rain water, so serviceable when dispersed, and so hurtful when stagnant, never lodges; whereas the holes retain the water, which checks the growth of the canes; nor do they bear drought so well. The plough is of signal use in stiff clays, the holing of which "*is a most laborious, dilatory task, and has injured multitudes of Negroes;*" for they can scarcely get through it, except in very favourable, open weather which does not always happen at the holing season. Children may serve to plant, in the furrow; the cane-junks may have 3 or 4 eyes; one row being laid in each furrow, and covered up at the return of the plough. After the planting, the able Negroes may cover the ridges well, raising them in the middle; may take the loose earth out of the trenches, and cut cross drains, where necessary. All this will be but play, when the surface has been broken. They who prefer planting in holes, will do well first to plough the land; as the Negroes will then do their work in *half the time*†. In this case, the land need not be cut so deep as when it is to be planted in the furrow. In either case, one or two ploughings at most will be sufficient, unless the land is very foul. When the plants are put in after the plough, I think that more land can be turned up and planted in a day, than can be holed and planted, in the usual way, in three, and with a tenth of the

\* The author probably means when the land is very stiff; or allows for the spaces of unbroken land taken up by the banks and distances; or for the two ploughings mentioned below.—W.D.

† And, in stiff land, with much less than half the fatigue.—W.D.

number of able Negroes; for, as the boys and girls of the grass-gang may cut and lay the junks in the furrow, a few able Negroes may supply them with cane-plants; and the rest may do other work, of which there is always enough on a large plantation.

It is a mistake that the plough will not leave due spaces; for a line of plants in every furrow will not be too thick\*. The ground will be all even, and the wind have a free course, and the trenches will also contribute to ventilation. But in the ordinary way, the young canes are deprived of this refreshment, by the high banks, which scorch them with the reflected sun-beams, in dry weather; and, in rainy, they are buried as in a wet ditch, which chills their roots. With the plough, canes need little supplying; for in wet seasons they are safe from being chilled by water, and in dry, their stools are at a sufficient depth to retain the moisture a long time. In ploughed land, the canes come up much stronger than in holed; owing to the effectual loosening of the soil, and to the free vent for the water.

The planter who wishes to try the plough, should send to G. Britain for a middle-aged husbandman, and a boy to follow the plough, which should be light and adapted to oxen.

The utility of the plough to cane-land in general, I am well convinced of by experience†. But there is very good reason to believe, that it would be very beneficial to our pastures and savannahs, which being impoverished by ancient culture, require to be broken up afresh.

The dung ought not to be strewed and left on the surface here, as in England; but immediately ploughed in.

*Hay.* The old inclosed savannahs near Spanish town are astonishingly rich. With moderate rains, their natural grass is constantly luxuriant. Those which are alternately in pasture and meadow, yield annually four tons of excellent hay, per acre, at two crops. No doubt, they would yield more with regular dressing; they are, however, hand-weeded or hoed clean. Since the severe drought in 1769 and 1770, many

\* With due submission to Mr. Long's better judgment, I should think that a line of plants in every third or fourth furrow, would be thick enough;—at least in the strong lands of Barbadoes, in good seasons.—W. D.

† In a Note on this page (452) Mr. Long mentions a gentleman of Jamaica who, he was informed, had nearly doubled his sugar crop, by following with turnips, agreeably to the modern British husbandry.

who had suffered heavily in the low lands, for want of fodder, make annual hay-ricks with Guinea grass; for, by sprinkling the strata of the rick with salt or salt water, it becomes an exceedingly hearty food.

The sour grass of the mountains and low lands, which, while green, all cattle reject, agrees, when cut and dried, perfectly well with labouring cattle. They are even fond of the wire-grass, when dried in the sun. The blades and tops both of Indian and Guinea corn, which are very nutritive, may be long preserved in stacks. The settlers therefore must be wanting in industry, if, among such a choice of food, they do not yearly provide ricks for their cattle, in case of extreme dry weather. Such drought as consumes all green food, is unusual; and hence, perhaps, their neglect. But, even in plentiful years, their labour would not be lost; for their working cattle, if fed, in the crop, at least partly, on this hay, would stand their toil much better than with a green, crude aliment; which, by causing a severe flux, often disables them before the crop is half over.

3. From "*A Treatise on Planting*," in 8vo.—No date or author's name; as the present fragment wants the title-page, and has only the half-title. But as Linnæus is quoted p. 1. &c. it cannot be very old. This fragment ends at p. 54 with offering to young distillers, a copy of the still-house book.

"The plough has been used with success in many parts of Jamaica; but particularly in Westmoreland and all the leeward parishes. Some planters there, with the plough and harrow, raise canes superior to what they used to do by holing, and with much more ease to their slaves; for *there is no plantation-work so laborious as digging cane-holes.*" —"Land being levelled soon after planted, sends up many shoots, nearly of equal growth. The spaces being well pulverised, the fibres penetrate throughout, and make the plants strong and succulent; and, having a good hold of the ground, they stand storms better than those planted in the common way." Page 11.

"To plough and harrow well, that the land may have the benefit of the seasons, will in some measure compensate for the want of manure." Page 16.

4. From the *Report of His Majesty's Privy Council*, in folio, dated March 1789.

Lieut. Gen. Matthew, Governor of Grenada, in answering the 42d query, uses these words: "I am convinced that experiments" [with ploughs &c.] "have not had sufficient, or fair trials, from the want of proper implements, suitable to the different soils and situations, and from the want of intelligent labourers. This matter has been given up, on slight investigation."

5. From *the same*. Part III. No. 9, p. 284. Detached Pieces of Evidence, referring to Jamaica.

Mr. Ashley (now of Cookham) was born in Jamaica, where he inherited an estate, which he himself converted into a sugar plantation. He made little use of the plough till 1783; before which his plantation never yielded above 115 tierces of sugar. From the great drought in 1782, the crops were very small in 1783 and 4; and Mr. A. being much incumbered, and fearing to run further in debt for Negroes, determined to extend the use of the plough; which he did from Nov. 1783, to May 1784. He opened fresh land with the plough, and without an additional Negro, made 235 tierces, being double his former quantity of sugar; but 1785 was a remarkably productive year. His Negroes, all this time, were 96, old and young; of whom he had 40 in the field, but seldom worked above 32.

Mr. A. left Jamaica in June 1785, and wished ploughing to be continued; but it has not. His Overseer always makes excuses, saying it will interfere with the cattle which are wanted for the crop; but Mr. A. differs from him, as the land may be ploughed in the end of the year, before crop time. Mr. A. thinks Overseers prejudiced against the plough, from dislike to be driven out of their old habits. As some few Overseers buy Negroes to let out, it may be their interest not to abridge the labour of Slaves.

Mr. A. never found the soil too dry for ploughing. He ploughed in the greatest droughts; to which his plantation, lying in a flat country, is subject, and which makes its crops precarious.

Parts of Jamaica are too hilly for the plough; but, in England, some land is ploughed as steep as can well be conceived. Mr. A. cannot say but parts of Jamaica may be too stony

stony to be ploughed. Much very steep land is in sugar plantations ; and it gives the surest crops, having more regular seasons, from being inland.

The cattle certainly bear the labour well. Mr. A's were in as good order, when he left off ploughing, as when he began. He ploughed from day-light, till 9 o'clock, and from 3 till dark ; the men and the cattle resting, in the heat of the day.

Holing an acre for canes, employs 40 Negroes a day, on an average of soil ; for which a jobber had 7*l.* curr. or 5*l.* sterl. Mr. A. ploughed an acre a day, with two sets of 8 oxen each, one for the morning, and one for the evening, to one plough ; and it took half a day more to put it in the same order for planting, as land dug by jobbers. But with two spells of oxen, he has ploughed two acres a day, and it answered fully as well as land holed by Negroes. Land holed by hand is never entirely broken up ; there being an intermediate space on which the earth is heaped up. Mr. A. experienced that ploughed land is more likely to yield good crops, than that holed by Negroes ; being more completely shaken by the plough, than the hoe.

Mr. A. though he generally ploughed with oxen, sometimes put two horses as leaders before the oxen, and they stood the labour as well as the latter. Mules, well trained, would stand it better than either.

Mr. A's estate has not produced so much since the plough was discontinued as before ; but that might be owing to the want of rains ; for, though the plough has not been used, there has been no want of labour ; as he has bought more Negroes, and hired jobbers occasionally ; but his expences have therefore been higher.

In the district where Mr. A's estate is situated, the labour is less than in many others ; as the canes bear cutting for 8 or 10 years, without re-holing and re-planting. In some parts of the island, one third of the sugar-land must be yearly re-planted : not bearing above two cuttings, once in plant, and once in ratoon. On these last estates, if not hilly, the plough would be much more useful. And Mr. A. thinks that the stock which work the mill, might plough after crop, till they begin again (say six months at least) without any addition of stock, or detriment to them.

Mr. A. found the Negroes learn the use of the plough very readily ; though at first the Negro set to plough seemed



to think it hard to do the work (as he termed it) of all the rest. Mr. A. had the driver trained to hold the plough; so that, in fact, there were two ploughmen to one plough, who relieved each other.

The seasons are so very precarious, in the district where Mr. A's estate is situated, that, in some years, they do not make sufficient for contingent expences; and in others, the returns are ample.

6. From the *Abridgement of the Minutes of Evidence on the Slave Trade, before the House of Commons, 1790, No. 4, p. 120.*

Mr. W. Fitzmaurice, who lived nearly 16 years in Jamaica, ten of them as an Overseer, says that he has known the plough often used advantageously; as "*it eases the Negroes,*" and pulverizes such soils as require it. Dove-hall, in St. Thomas's in the Vale, ploughed 40 or 50 acres, every fall. He knew Mr. Edwards only put in canes, after the plough, without holing; except on an estate Mr. Pinnock is attorney for, which made great returns. The chief obstacle is, that Overseers look for immediate labour; and often there is not a blacksmith within 15 miles, to repair the plough\*. He has often attempted ploughing, and has been obliged, by these obstacles, to leave it off.

7. From the same, page 130.

Mr. George Woodward is both an owner and a mortgagee of property in Barbadoes, where he resided in 1777, 1782 and 1783,—says that *the Slaves may be greatly relieved by the plough*. The first he ever saw in the island, he took over himself. He is sure it tilled the ground better than the hoe. The labour of holding the plough is much easier than holing. It did not require much labour to prepare the land for canes, after ploughing. It is not difficult to plough six inches deep, which is sufficient for canes. The strongest clay land may be ploughed. He thinks most of the cane and ginger land of Barbadoes may be ploughed to advantage, and the saving of Negro labour. The Negroes are not

\* All capital plantations have, or ought to have, blacksmiths, carpenters, and coopers, with proper shops for those "tradesmen;" especially where the sugar works are so widely scattered, as in some parts of Jamaica. See Ligon, 113; Trapham, 26; Edwards, ii. 254. Tradesmen, when unemployed in their crafts, may work in the field, as I have known them do.—W. D.

averse to the plough: he has seen them both hold and drive it. The cattle were not injured by the labour. He is acquainted with the plough in England; as he farms land of his own. Capt. Lee took out some ploughs for him, about three years ago.

8. From *the same*; pages 130, 131.

Mr. Joseph Woodward was in Barbadoes in 1788, 1789 and 1790. Has there seen the plough used by Mr. Henry Trotman jun. and believes he has used it many years. Mr. T. told him that he thought tillage by the plough, both better and cheaper than by the hoe. The land that he ploughed was not the best: it was rather rocky. Mr. T. said, that the plough in time, would become general, when people became acquainted with its utility.

9. From *A Descriptive Account of Jamaica*, by William Beckford, Esq. printed 1790, vol. 2. pp. 192—195.

In no country, is there more room for agricultural improvement than in Jamaica. But indolence must be removed, and industry awakened; and slow and progressive experiments must be made, with patience and observation. For cultivation is not known in Jamaica as a science, but only as a routine of duty. Hence the doctrine of manure, and the use of the plough are only considered as operations of annual recurrence, and not as objects that may either injure or improve.

That the land will not require so much cleaning after being ploughed, as it did in the ordinary mode, cannot, I think, be doubted. "*The plough saves, in some cases, prodigious labour to the Negroes*;" and eradicates, or keeps down, weeds. It enriches, by the additional cattle it requires, a barren soil, and loosens a stiff one. It renders the cane richer, and improves the sugar in grain and colour. Whether the quantity be enhanced, since the plough has been so generally used, I will not determine; but that it might be made to answer better than it now does, cannot, I think, be easily denied.

10. From the *History of the West Indies*, by Bryan Edwards, Esq. printed in 1793.

*Plough.* The plough has been introduced of late \* into

\* But Mr. Edwards, p. 39 of his Speech, at a conference between the Council and Assembly of Jamaica, 19 Nov. 1789, says that the plough was introduced

Jamaica especially, and, in some few cases, to great advantage. But it is not every soil and situation that will admit its use; some lands being much too stony, and others too steep. A practice prevails of ploughing, cross-ploughing, round-ridging, and harrowing the same lands, from year to year, or at least every other year, without manure. This is utterly destructive of the rattoons, and altogether ruinous. Some of late manage better: they plough stiff and clayey land, once or twice, early in the spring, and give it a summer fallow. In the autumn following, being then mellowed and more easily worked, it is holed and planted manually, in the old way. But the only advantage of ploughing, in the W. Indies, is to confine it to *holing*\*, which is much more easily done by the plough than the hoe; and “*the relief which, in stiff and dry soils, it gives to the Negroes, exceeds all estimation.*” I speak from practical knowledge. At a plantation of my own, most of the land annually planted, is neatly and sufficiently laid into cane-holes, by one man, three boys, and eight oxen, with the common single-wheeled plough, having the share somewhat wider than usual.—By returning the plough back along the furrow, the turf is thrown to the right and left, forming a trench 7 inches deep,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet wide at top, and 1 foot wide at bottom. A space of 18 or 20 inches is left between the trenches, on which the mould is thrown, and thus the banks are formed, and the holing completed. Thus the land is not too much exposed to the sun; and thus 20 acres are easily holed with one plough, in 13 days. The plants are then placed in the trench, as in the common way. Vol. 2. p. 213.—Mr. E. observes, at p. 215, that, in a day’s work of ten hours, an able Negro will dig from 100 to 120 cane-holes; each  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet square at top, 15 inches at bottom and 5 or 6 inches deep; and, in ploughed land, *double the number*, in the same time.

*Hay.* Jamaica abounds with excellent grasses. Of the native grass is made exceedingly good hay; but not in great abundance; it being practised only in a few parts. But it is the less necessary, as there are two kinds of valuable artificial grass, yielding great profusion of fodder.\* The

roduced above 30 years ago, and has been very generally used on the plains of Westmorland, &c. he believes, for near 20 years.

\* Mr. E. means trenching; for holes cannot be formed by the plough.—W.D.

first

first is an aquatic called Scots\* grass, generally supposed exotic; but, Mr. E. thinks it grows in most swamps in the W. Indies. It rises 5 or 6 feet, with long succulent joints, and is of quick growth. From an acre of this plant, five horses may be fed a year, allowing 56lb.\* a day to each. The other kind, call'd Guinea grass, may be ranked next to the sugar-cane, in importance. Most of the grazing and breeding pens in the island are supported chiefly by this invaluable herbage. Hence the plenty of cattle for the butcher and planter. Perhaps the settlement of the north side is wholly owing to the accidental introduction of this grass, about 50 years ago, when its seeds came from Guinea as food for birds. Vol. 1. p. 194.

11. From "*Des Colonies modernes sous la Zone torride, et particulièrement de celle de S. Domingue, &c. Par M. Barré Saint Venant, Colon de S. Domingue, &c.*" 8vo. pp. 516. Paris, 1802.

This author has enlarged much on the advantages of European implements in cultivating the sugar-cane, &c. He lived 35 years in the W. Indies, 32 of them in St. Domingo, during 12 of which, after overcoming many difficulties, he established what he calls (and it would appear not without ground for a superlative epithet) the *finest* sugar estate in the new world; and formed an excellent gang of Slaves, with less waste of human life than is usual, even on old settled plantations. See his *Introd.* p. vii. and pp. 335, 337. His book appears to have been written for the information of *Buonaparté*, when intent on the restoration of St. Domingo; which M. St. Venant insists, can only be effected by the labour of cattle; the remnant of Negroes, left by the massacres and burnings, being, in his opinion, otherwise insufficient for the re-establishment of the colony. In other respects, our author, obsequious to the "*Homme trois fois grand*," is a doughty champion of *Despotism*, under the engaging name of "*La Puissance Paternelle*." p. 161, 422.

\* Or *Scotch* grass, by Mr. Long, vol. 3. p. 767. I have heard the name ascribed to its having been first planted in the Barbadoes parish of St. Andrew. commonly called Scotland; in the low and rich bottoms of which it was likely to grow naturally. Small patches both of it and of Guinea grass, are cultivated in that, and the other windward islands. Mr. E. might have added the sour grass mentioned already from Long, vol. 1. p. 453, who also says, vol. 3. p. 765, that it stands the driest weather, while other grasses are scorched.—W.D.

But he does not show *how* the Negroes are *now* to be reconciled to the yoke, or *who* is to impose it on their necks\*. His theory is chiefly founded on the convenient principle of adapting laws to climate; on which some of his countrymen have laid more stress than it will fairly bear;—as if justice was to be one thing in Paris, and another in St. Domingo; as if the rules of morality, though founded in human nature itself and its relations, were to rise and fall with the thermometer; or obedience to the Decalogue was to be measured by degrees of latitude and longitude. See p. 161. In a word, M. St. Venant is a decided enemy to *negrophilisme*, and a staunch advocate for the old *regime* of St. Domingo, in every thing but his æconomical doctrines, and his zeal for the plough. To follow him here, would be to transcribe a great part of his book; and we can only afford room for a condensed abstract of what he delivers.—

W. D.

\* He says, however, p. 90, that “to reclaim the Negroes to labour, *more violent* means must be hereafter employed, than those by which we commonly put them in motion.” Well: the *most violent* means have since been employed; and the consequence has been the loss of St. Domingo to France, probably for ever.—For I suppose, no *disinterested* man, acquainted with the *climate* and natural resources, and trifling wants of so extensive and distant a country, will henceforth be *mad* enough to believe, that St. Domingo *can* be conquered by France, or *any other* European power;—if the blacks are only *united*, and conducted by leaders of courage and common sense. On these probable suppositions, any one who has read the history of Jamaica might have foreseen, and indeed a friend of mine predicted in 1794, that any attempt to subdue the Negroes of St. Domingo, would be abortive. “The wild Negroes,” says Mr. Long, “kept possession of their mountainous recesses, held out against *forty times their number*—and at length were able to put an end to the struggle, by a treaty of peace the more honourable to them, as it confirmed to them the full enjoyment of that freedom for which they had so long and obstinately contended.” Long, vol. 1. p. 124; see also p. 405, and vol. 2. p. 338, &c.—Trelawney was the first Governor of Jamaica, who discovered, in 1739, that *force* could never reduce those Negroes to subjection. He justly ~~thought~~ that the inhuman cruelties which were often exercised on those unhappy men, when their unlucky stars threw them into the hands of white men, were the principal reasons which made them refuse to submit; and therefore he resolved to try gentle means, which were soon attended with all the happy consequences that could be wished. On a promise of freedom and security, the Negroes laid down their arms; and all, to a man, cheerfully submitted. The articles on which they surrendered, contain little further than a ratification of His Excellency’s promise for their future Freedom, and an assurance of His Majesty’s protection, on their observance of certain conditions.”—“Is it not natural here to observe, how strongly the love of liberty prevails in the breasts of men; notwithstanding the most wretched circumstances? Those Runaways endured more, for near the *space* of a century, than can be found on record of any state or people. They struggled with a superior force,

The true principles of agriculture, says M. St. Venant, were formerly \* unknown in St. Domingo; its fertility rendering that study unnecessary. Now, the evils of the revolution are to be repaired, and the ascendancy of rival nations repressed; which can *only* be done by œconomizing the Negroes, and substituting cattle for their hands. Page 271.

Indigo has been almost abandoned in St. Domingo. The present method of cultivating it is "*labare, sauvage et ruineuse*." Instead of *scratching* (*gratter*) the land with hoes, it must be deeply ploughed. One man and three horses will plough an *arpent* (somewhat more than an English acre †) per day; which is more than 40 ordinary Negroes would do. This ploughing should be done before the rains cease, and the land becomes hard. The harrow must follow; and, if necessary, a roller covered with iron pikes; for indigo land must be pulverized like ashes. These operations will not only kill the weeds, but the *chenille*, or caterpillar which preys on the indigo plant. The weeding should be done with the horse-hoe (unknown in St. Domingo) with which two men and a horse may easily weed three English acres per day. Pages 274, 281, 282.

The only place in which the author mentions the carting of dung is at p. 284, where he uses the word *voitures* (in connection with *engrais*) as a kind of *vox signata*, known to every body; so that the practice of carting out dung and spreading it (without the oppressive use of baskets) was probably common in St. Domingo. He shows the indigo planters how even the carting of dung may be saved by the folding of cattle, sheep &c. by which he does not mean tying the animals to stakes on one spot, till their dung, with earth, bushes and weeds ‡ form a heap, called a *penn*; but

force, went naked, exposed to the inclemencies of the air, fed on roots and fruits, and cheerfully ventured their lives, to secure themselves free. Can the history of old Rome produce greater examples? The Negroes, though unfortunate, held it out to the last, and made terms not inglorious to themselves. The Romans, always successful, fell a prey to one of their own citizens." Hist. of Jamaica in 13 Letters, dated 1740, p. 227.—W. D.

\* That is, before the troubles, which commenced in 1791. According to Wimpffen, p. 320, there was not in St. Domingo, in 1790, a planter capable of explaining even the elements of agriculture.—W. D.

† A *carreau* contains 3 *arpents*, and an *arpent* 100 *perches*, each 20 French feet square. Now, as 1000 French feet make 1068 English, and an acre contains 43,560 English square feet, it will be found, that 21 *arpents* are nearly equal to 22 English acres; the proportion which we observe in reducing the French measure into English.—W. D.

‡ In Barbadoes, each beast is tied by the horns, or neck, to a stake, round which

a fold fenced with moveable hurdles, in which the cattle range about, after they have done feeding.

He recommends the plough, the horse-hoe, and the folding of cattle, to the cotton planters. Pages 315 to 321.

The author observes that old habits oppose improvements, in all countries. In France, he says, it would be very difficult to get the peasants to plough with horses, in districts where they use oxen. The plough had been tried by many (before the revolution) only to be abandoned. He himself made great efforts in this way, without much benefit; because such a change cannot be effected on a small, or private scale. Some even sent ploughmen and ploughs from France; but the horses had been spoiled by the black grooms. The Negroes laughed at the white ploughman, because he worked in the field. He grew fretful and beat them, or sick, and abandoned his work in disgust. Another ploughman could not be found; nor could a plough be made or mended, for want of proper workmen †. pp. 338 to 341.

Hence, he thinks, this great work should be undertaken

which it has leave to turn in a circle; and thus to dung, and stale and trample on the pitiful morsels of its fellows; so that more grass or weeds are often destroyed than eaten, after they have cost the Slaves so much extra trouble to pick them; not to mention the whippings for not getting enough. In St. Christophers, the mode of penning and feeding is somewhat different; but equally wasteful and absurd. Ramsay's Ess. on the Treatm. &c. p. 73.—In Jamaica, the folds recommended by M. St. Venant are common, but not so beneficial as could be wished; indeed often destructive, on the hills, and in bad weather, especially to the calves. Beckford, vol. 2 p. 205; Mathison, p. 49. The truth is, that no labouring animal *can* stand the sun and rains in the W. Indies. The cattle should be sheltered in some such way as is recommended by Col. Martin, p. 461, above.—W. D.

† See the note about tradesmen p. 470 above. He must be a bungling carpenter who cannot mend a plough, or even make one, with a pattern before him; and a stupid blacksmith who cannot mend or even make plough irons. I have seen black workmen daily employed in more difficult jobs than in making ploughs of even the best construction, after proper patters—As to the ridicule &c. I well remember when the same obstacles opposed the planting of potatoes with the plough, in a district where they are now planted, weeded, earthed up and dug with that implement *alone*, and that in a masterly way;—to the saving of much hard labour and expence in planting them, in what were ironically called “lazy beds.” I may say the same of the introduction of lime and turnips into the low lands, and of a superior breed of sheep into the mountains of the same district. The author of this last improvement (an intelligent farmer, and a correspondent of Sir John Sinclair's) told me that he had to stand the mockery of the bigots to the old breed of sheep, for some years. But now, said he, they are obliged either to adopt the new breed, or to quit their farms; the advanced rents of which they can no longer pay with the old breed; and they have frankly acknowledged their error.—W. D.

by

by the French Government, which alone can command the necessary resources. The want of Slaves, and the destruction of other colonial means, impose the obligation of this measure. The success of it may render the dreadful convulsion an ultimate benefit to St. Domingo; where the plough could never have been introduced, without some such catastrophe. Page 342.

Such, in brief, is M. St. Venant's account of the obstacles which will prevent individuals from making this great improvement; and of his reasons for proposing the undertaking to the French Government. It is not for us to decide on the propriety, or the *motives*, of this proposal; but every man must see that his objections (except the want of Slaves and the minor wants he mentions, as the very *grounds* and *reasons* of his recommending the plough) are of so *universal* a nature, that, had they been valid, no improvement could ever have been effected, in any practical art whatever! All the facts and arguments which he states, are so many answers to his own objections; and even what he says about inability, must be understood of the generality of planters, in a colony lately ruined. For, at p. 432, in urging the Society of Agriculture, at Paris, to train ploughmen for St. Domingo, he takes it for granted that they will call on the remaining colonists to second their efforts; and particularly on M. Brun Condamine, who has employed a set of ploughs at Port-au-Prince, and whose perseverance and intelligence have attained success. He worked with oxen, and each of his ploughs dispatched half an English acre per day. But our author thinks that horses or mules, with better constructed ploughs, would make out an acre or perhaps more\*. At p. 346, he says that in St. Domingo a plough always tills an acre a day; with three horses. P. 282.

\* M. Poyvre says that at the C. of G. Hope, he has seen oxen draw wheel carriages with as much speed as good horses. *Observ. sur les Mœurs &c. des Peuples de l'Afrique*, &c. p. 11.—Did the poor Native teach the slow Dutch the art of training their cattle to this quick pace? These people have wonderfully improved their oxen by kindness and attention. They teach those they call *Brakeleys* to look after the rest of the flock, and to guard them from strangers, and even from beasts of prey. They also train them to attack their enemies in battle. *Jour. au Cap*, par KOLBE, pp. 160, 307.—The Caffre King, Gaika, having been sent to by Mr. Barrow and his party, "made his appearance, riding on an ox, at full gallop." *Epit. of Barrow's Travels in S. Africa*, p. 41.—"All the address of our European waggon-drivers (the author might say of our European coach men) vanishes entirely before the very superior dexterity of the African colonists [of the Cape.] In a very brisk trot, or even a gallop, they are perfect masters of eight oxen, and



M. St. Venant next highly extols the plough; without which, he observes, all countries not extremely fertile, including the whole of Europe, would be mere deserts; for even with the plough, it is necessary, in most countries, to employ about 3-5ths of the people in tillage, for the support of the whole. Page 344.

In the colonies in general, he says, that the population will increase, of its own accord, when delivered from the *painful and destructive labour* (*travail pénible et destructeur*, an expression repeated, p. 362.) attending the present system; and that, without the cheap and powerful succour of the plough, the inhabitants of St. Domingo must remain involved in misfortune, or will revert to barbarism. Pages 345, 346.

In the ordinary way of culture,\* 4136 holes must be dug in every English acre; being a day's work for 41 Negroes\* of a kind of labour which they could not long support. For the land is very strong and hard, and only to be dug by robust and dexterous Slaves, of whom there are but few on any plantation†. But the same quantity may be ploughed in a day, by two men and three or four horses; and thus may the Negroes be delivered from a *toil so very severe that it might be called destructive* (*travail tellement pénible, que l'on peut dire qu'il étoit destructeur*). Should the plough be no farther useful, than in preserving the lives of men, ought we not to do every thing in our power to substitute it for forced labour? Pages 346, 347.

If the canes are not interlined with peas and maize, or Indian corn, as they too commonly are‡, they might be weeded with the horse-hoe, which is beneficial to the land, dispatches three acres in a day, and leaves no hand-weeding, except in the bunches, or stools, of canes. For want of hands, only a third of the cane land could be yearly planted. The rest was left in ratoon, which in the first year yielded half the produce of the first-crop, or planted canes, about

and avoid, with the utmost skill, every hole and every stone in the road." Page 52 of Edin. Rev. Feb. 1813, Art. 2. Dr. Lichtenstein's Trav. in S. Africa, 1806 &c. transl. by Miss Plumptre, 1812.—W. D.

\* In Barbadoes, only about 2400 cane-holes are dug in an acre by 28 or 29 Negroes; on an average. In Jamaica, there are from 3 to 4000 holes in an acre, dug by about 36 Negroes. Average from Edwards, vol. 2. p. 216; and Ashley quoted above; Moreton, p. 44.

† See Mathison's Notices, pp. 37, 39.

‡ This is also a common practice in our islands; though condemned by the best planters; unless where the land is very clean and rich.—W. D.

a fourth

a fourth of that produce the second year, and scarcely any thing in the third\*. Rattoons multiply more than planted canes; but the want of sufficient culture, and our ignorance of the manner in which the plant is reproduced, cause immense loss. On this last point we are referred to the *Précis sur la Canne à Sucre* (Paris, 1781) par M. Dutrone Lacouture; which our author recommends to every planter. Page 353.

If, says M. St. Venant, the cane-stumps are covered about an inch deep with earth, by a plough with a double mould-board, the ratoons springing from them will be more advanced in eight days, than planted canes will in six weeks. Page 361.

The plough will insure to the planter one third, or perhaps, with the Otahite cane, one half more profit than the present mode.—From the intervals between the cane pieces, three yearly crops of grasses and provisions may be reaped, which will compensate for the articles with which the canes are usually interlined. Page 362.

Our author says, that, though his work was as pressing as that of his neighbours, he contrived, in crop-time, to put out the fires at midnight, and to light them again at five in the morning. He observes that this greatly relieved his Slaves; and that the quantity of Sugar made was not diminished by it so much as the quality was improved. He adds that a part of the time saved by the plough, may be advantageously added, as supernumerary days, to the crop †. Page 389.

At page 364, M. Saint Venant gives  
A COMPARATIVE VIEW of the culture of the Sugar-cane by  
Manual Labour, and by the Plough, &c.

The former taken from the journal of a plantation of 314 English acres of good land, with a fine gang of 200 Slaves; according to a work published, in 1799, by M. Avasle, a planter of St. Domingo; the latter calculated on a plantation of the same extent and number of Slaves.

\* The canes in St. Domingo do not appear to rattoon much better than in our old islands; and not nearly so well as in some parts of Jamaica and our new colonies. But what our author here states may apply but to a part of St. Domingo. He might have observed that the juice of ratoons yields a greater proportion of sugar, and of better sugar, than that of first-crop, or planted canes.—W. D.

† That is, if the canes are not suffering by drought, &c.—W. D.

It is here supposed that two-thirds of the land, or 209 acres, are appropriated to canes, and the rest to pasture and provisions; that one-third of the Slaves are in the first gang, one-third in the second, and the rest unfit to work in the cane-fields; and that there are 280 working days in the year, exclusive of Sundays, holidays, bad weather and sickness\*.

	Manual labour, without Plough, &c.		Manual labour, with Plough, &c.	
	Days 1st gang.	Days 2d gang.	Days 1st gang.	Days 2d gang.
According to M. Avallé, five pieces of canes were annually planted; amounting to 68 English acres, the holing of which required - - - †	1557			
And the planting of the same - - -	-	822		
With the help of the Plough, the same land would require, in manual labour, only -	-	-	65	65
The planting will be easier; but no deduction is made for this, - - -	-	-	-	822
M. Avallé bestows only 2345 days on 68 acres of rattoons. But we extend our labour to 140 acres, and give them double the work, in the common mode - - -	6600	3200		
With the help of the plough, those rattoons would require, in hand-labour, only - -	-	-	155	135
Especially if the field-trash is burnt; if not, 4 Negroes of the 2d gang will be required to spread it before the plough, which adds, of hand-labour, about - - -	-	-	-	540
M. Avallé reckons, for weeding all the canes, about - - -	-	17000		
But we do most of the weeding with the horse hoe; so that we require, of manual labour, only - - -	-	-	268	268
And for hand-weeding the stools of canes, we allow - - -	-	-	-	8000
	8157	21022	468	9830
	468	9830		
Difference, in favour of the Plough and Horse-hoe - - -	7689	11192		

\* But our author, true to the Slave-system, never once mentions the *Mar-ronnage*, or runaways and their hunters. If these are allowed for, his working days will be reduced lower than Mr. Steele's estimate. See pp. 71 and 434, above.—W. D.

† This supposes an acre to be holed for canes in a day by 23 Slaves, who, no doubt, may do thus much for a few days; but, at the end of 68 days, or say 11 weeks, I do think that they will be sufficiently tired, even if they are all able men.—In short, it is quite plain that M. Avallé allows by far too little time for holing his 68 acres. If, with M. St. Venant, p. 232, we make the holing of an acre for canes, a day's work for 40 ordinary Negroes, the holing of 68 acres will be equivalent to 2720 days' labour of one man.—W. D.

Here,

Here, says our author, is a saving by the plough, of 27 Slaves of the first gang and 40 of the second, at 280 working days in the year; being about the half of the annual labour\* of 200 Slaves of all ages; supposing one third of them to be in first gang and as many in the second, the rest being domestics, infants &c. In short, the present terrible toil (*terrible travail*) will be executed without effort; population will increase, the returns will be augmented, and prosperity will be diffused throughout valuable establishments which have hitherto been the abodes of compulsory labour.

12. From *An Essay on the good Effects, &c. of the Abolition of the African Slave-trade*; by Stephen Gaisford, Esq. printed London 1811, page 93. \*

"Notwithstanding the level surface of Barbadoes, takes away all excuses of a natural impediment to the use of the plough, there are not more than two or three estates, I am credibly informed, which are in the regular practice of using such machinery." See the extracts from the evidence of the two witnesses, at p. 470 above.

13. From *Notices respecting Jamaica, in 1808, 1809, and 1810*; by Gilbert Mathison, Esq. † printed London 1811.

It is difficult to conceive any rational objection to the

\* That is, "half the annual labour" of *all* kinds. But, according to the foregoing statement, above nine-tenths of the *holing* and *weeding* are saved by the plough and horse hoe, to the great gang, and above one half to the second gang; even supposing but a moiety of the labour given to the rattoons, which M. St. Venant assigns to them. This extraordinary attention to rattoons, he seems to have learned from the experiments and observations, on the reproduction of the sugar-cane, which M. Dutrone made under his own eye. See p. 393. Too little labour is generally bestowed on rattoons, in our islands. But I own that our author does not make it plain to me, that they ought to have double the labour which is given to planted canes.—W. D.

† I am not clear as to the propriety of quoting so largely from the performance of a living author, with whom I have not the honour to be acquainted; and of condensing a style so well adapted to the subject, in order to get as much meaning into as little room as I can. But Mr. Mathison's observations, as a practical planter, are so important and so recent, that I cannot withstand the temptation of inserting a part of them. The whole pamphlet indeed is extremely interesting, especially to *absent* Proprietors, and most of all to Proprietors who know nothing of the *real* state of things in the W. Indies;—because they never were there;—never saw their own plantations!—W. D.

plough in cultivating level lands, or those of ordinary declivity, in *any* country. But as objections have been made to this valuable instrument in Jamaica, it is apparently presumable that these objections are good; and that the planters, whose interests are at stake, are the best judges of its utility. Page 67.

It is said, 1st. That the plough breaks the *grain* of the soil, and thereby injures it. 2dly. That, by turning up the land and exposing it to the sun, the *earthy* and *nitrous salts* are evaporated, and the fertility diminished. 3dly. That the expence of labour and of cattle, destroyed in working the plough, amounts to more than the value of the labour required in the established practice. Page 68.

Of the *first* objection, Mr. Mathison says, that, as far as it is intelligible, it is not true; for, supposing minute division to hurt the soil, the plough does not, in fact, break it more minutely than the hoc.

On the *second* objection, our author remarks that, before sentence is passed on an instrument so valuable in other countries, three important facts show | established by experiment: 1st. That *soil*, properly so called, abounds in *earthy* and *nitrous* salts. 2dly. That those salts are essential to the growth of plants. 3dly. That the sun *can*, according to the known laws of heat, take up salts of any kind, or deprive the earth of *any* fertilizing substance. Page 69.

Here we are presented with a perspicuous and well connected chain of facts and reasonings; for which we must refer to the work itself. We are told that MM. André and Parmentier have ascertained that the richest soils contain no salts whatever; but that they found a little in recently applied manure. Hence common salt appears to fertilize land only indirectly, by destroying insects, as the borer, &c. Lime hastens putrefaction; salt retards it. Salts, therefore, hurt plants\*, except in very minute quantities, when, at the best, they merely stimulate vegetation. Page 73.

Salts can only act when in solution; and, as heat evaporates the solution till the salt crystallizes, the sun, at the highest known temperature, must benefit vegetation, in

\* "A salt land, and not inhabited." Jerem. xvii. 6.—W. D.

any soil happening to abound with salts. Thus the planter must discover that exposure to the solar rays, in tropical climates, hurts the soil, in some *other* way, to justify him, as an *œconomist*, in rejecting the Plough. Page 77.

Agriculture, in the W. Indies, is at a low ebb. No aids are furnished, as in Europe, by science and experiment; and, though Mr. A. Young has collected the opinions of Mr. Martin, of Antigua, and others, that, in hot climates, fertility is impaired by the solar rays, yet the question is by no means disposed of in a philosophical way. Page 78.

Mr. Naesmyth repeatedly evaporated dung-juice, in the sun and in a sand heat. The carbonaceous matter which was left, easily dissolved in water, and when poured to the roots of plants, excited a vigorous growth. He found that the steam of the dung-juice, raised by the sand heat (of at least  $212^{\circ}$ ) and collected in a clean muslin cloth, seemed not to differ in colour, or taste, from rain-water; so that it would appear that none of the carbonaceous food of plants is exhaled by the sun. The opinions of a sciolist (as Mr. Mathison modestly calls himself) must be delivered with diffidence. But still he believes, that this objection affects not the plough, but the injudicious use of it. If land be ploughed and canes planted in the dry season, or, where the climate is adverse, at any season, the experiment cannot be called fair. Pages 81, 82, 83.

Summer-fallowing is not practised in Jamaica. The cane-holes are usually formed, and the canes planted with all possible expedition; and there is nothing to prevent this, whether the hoe is used, or the plough. The cane-holes are two feet wide, the centre of each being four feet from the centre of the adjoining one. Where the land is strong and hard, *the digging of these holes is the hardest work of the Negro*. But, where the rains can be depended on, the whole surface might be ploughed, left a suitable time to pulverize, and then holed with the hand-hoe; and thus might the labour of the Negro, in land of moderate tenacity, be diminished "at least in the proportion of four to one\*." And this is the exposure which the professional

\* Mr. Mathison here speaks of the Slave's exertion, or what philosophical writers call his "quantity of action." Mr. Edwards, as quoted p. 472 above, evidently means the quantity of land holed, without considering the Slave's quantity of action.—W. D.

planter thinks is to affect the fertility of the land! Pages 84, 85.

I do not recommend the English practice of ploughing, cross-ploughing and harrowing. It could do no good, would be expensive, and might be hazardous. But in dry climates, trenches may be ploughed four feet asunder, either with a double mould-board, or by returning the plough along the same furrow. This is the cheapest method, and exposes the land the least; but it requires experienced ploughmen.—But perhaps the impartial observer might, without minute discussion, refer the prevailing aversion to the plough to *other causes* than the fear of sterilizing the soil! Page 86.

The *third* objection regards the expence, and may be obviated by calculation.—Mr. M. says, his cane-fields are level, of moderate strength and texture, but in some places, rather friable. The sub-soil is clay or loam. Eight oxen, with two men and a boy, should plough in a day, resting at noon, three quarters of an acre, six inches deep\*. Pre-supposing abundant food, and careful management, he thinks the dung of the cattle will more than repay their keep. The land being prepared with the plough, in 1809, he holed 8 acres, with 30 labourers, in 4 days. This at 2s. 6d. † each per day makes 37s. 6d. per acre. Add for two men and a boy, at the plough, for ten days, at 2s. 6d. each per day, 9s. 4d½. per acre; say

Attendants on plough, per acre	-	-	-	£0	9	4½
Digging cane-holes in the ploughed land, per acre	-	-	-	1	17	6
			Jamaica cur.	£2	6	10½

Holing the same land, according to the old system, would cost as follows,

Hoeing off the turf, per acre	-	-	-	£2	0	0
Digging the cane-holes, per acre	-	-	-	8	0	0
			Jamaica cur.	£10	0	0

Thus there is saved in Negro labour no less than 7l. 13s. 1½d. per acre (above 75 per cent.) a most surprising saving, says Mr. M. in every point of view, and enough to

\* Mr. Mathison says that his was a heavy ill made plough, contrived by a common carpenter. But he apprehends, that six oxen, with a proper plough and harness, abundantly fed, and well managed, would plough three quarters of an acre, without any change of cattle, in about eight hours. But it might be prudent to stop, in the heat of the day. Note, page 87.

† This 2s. 6d. is the price paid by the planters of Jamaica for the day-labour of Slaves. See p. 263, above.

tempt Planters to overstep the prejudices or timidity of their Overseers, and encourage the plough, wherever rocks and declivity do not prevent it. Pages 87, 88.

It is not easy to introduce reform, in opposition to the prejudices of professed planters, and the well founded distrust of the Negroes. But the way is now opened to improvement, by the Abolition of the ~~Slave-trade~~. "A spirit of intolerance, that used to forbid, or *make unsafe*! all free and candid discussions on this interesting topic, is very much subsided." Many persons interested in W. Indian affairs, candidly admit the wisdom, if not the necessity, of that bold measure; and it may be hoped, that all will become daily more familiar with free inquiry, and even encourage it. Page 89.

At this crisis, it is of infinite value to know how to assimilate the management to the actual ~~state~~ of the plantations. The author then recommends the establishment of a lying-in apartment, the instruction of the midwife, and the superintendence of the doctor. He next points out the advantages of a nursery for weaned children, supplied with proper attendants, and with nourishing diet. He observes, that the hospitals already established, may require considerable regulation; and that *no patients should be allowed to want food, or be left to their own resources, during their sickness!!* &c. Pages 90—92.

"*Subsistence*," he continues, "*is the very basis of all productive labour.*" And yet the *first* object of the Overseer's care is the canes; the *second* the cattle; and the *last* the Negroes! who in point of subsistence, are required, and, in most cases, are left entirely, to take care of themselves! Our author, without meaning that the canes should, in any case, be neglected, would reverse this system; with a view to meet the exigencies of the planter's situation, and to remove one of the most obvious causes of depopulation. Pages 93, 94.

Labour, he grants, might be turned to better account in raising canes than provisions, *if* the market was always abundant. But he says that most of the markets in Jamaica, are scantily supplied. *They depend chiefly on the United States. This supply is so doubtful, and the hazard of famine so great*, that the planter would be justified in employing *effective* labourers, in raising provisions, independently



pendently of the market. See p. 313, above. But the author only recommends his own practice, of making weakly people, children and pregnant women, and *occasionally* abler labourers, plant provisions; for most kinds of which, he says, exhausted cane-land is very suitable. Provisions, he adds, ought to be given liberally; in spite of the niggardly policy, too common in Jamaica, of refusing subsistence to many, really in want, for fear of encouraging idleness! Thus many valuable lives would be saved, the children and men would be invigorated, and the women produce a healthy and contented race; to falsify the notion that the islands must be ruined by the Abolition of the Slave-trade. Pages 95—98.

The *plough* and the *steam-engine*, Mr. M. observes, are peculiarly valuable; the former by relieving the Slave of *his most laborious duty*, and the latter by accelerating the grinding of canes, so as to prevent night-work. Page 98.

The greatest obstacle to improvement is the *bigotry* of the Overseers and Attornies, or Agents. These last, after passing through all the inferior gradations, have arrived at the superintendence of a number of the plantations of Absentees. Mr. M. owns that many of both descriptions act on liberal principles, but thinks it necessary to state *distinctly*, though in general terms, that *such Agents* and *such Overseers* as he chiefly alludes to, are not fit persons to introduce a proper change of measures. This ~~must~~ be done by the *Person most interested* in preserving the property. *He* must become the eye-witness of all the transactions on his own estate. *He* can no longer act on a large, unfeeling scheme, regardless of the lives of men and cattle! *He* must encourage his people to acquire property, the best security for attachment and good behaviour—must encourage them to look to *him* for patronage—must hear their complaints, anticipate their wants, and mitigate their sufferings, by every possible expedient. Mr. M. adds, with becoming spirit and propriety, that *He* (the Proprietor) “must begin by *beating down*, with a powerful hand, the *arrogance* and deeply rooted *prejudices* of his Overseer, as the first, necessary step towards accomplishing his plans; as the most certain means of obtaining the confidence and co-operation of the Slaves.” Page 100.

It is of infinite importance to overcome the *distrust* of the *Negroes*, who are so used to exaction, that every change,  
though

though for their benefit, makes them suspect oppression. This is the natural effect of Slavery; so that the Slaves often oppose indirectly the best regulations.

"*The Overseer, on his part, has a card to play!* He is perhaps a *Jobber*, or is concerned, in some way, with that class of people;" or from an unintelligible *esprit du corps*, he becomes lukewarm or worse, when machinery is to be substituted for labourers. The *Attorney* again, is heavily *responsible*. If he continue the established practice, his system is defensible, as generally approved. But experiment hazards both his character and his ease.

From these causes, all changes, however salutary, are most difficult; abuses become inveterate; and, at this crisis, the Planter is exposed to the *alternative* of multiplied risks of *ruin*, or of interposing his personal authority, by *residing* on his plantation; a measure which, however unpleasant, cannot be too strongly or too often insisted on\*.

Mr. M. professes himself almost ashamed to dwell on a simple question, resolvable into this single maxim: *Freed abundantly, and give fair play*—a golden maxim which, whether practised by Overseer, Attorney, or resident Planter, is of the most sovereign efficacy; nor is it intelligible, he adds, how any man can mistake his course, in this emergency, except by those who know the force of habit and prejudice in obscuring the most obvious truths, and fettering the human understanding. Pages 101—104.

In his *Appendix*, Mr. Mathison, among other excellent Rules and Instructions for his Overseer, enjoins that "every Negro whose provision grounds have through idleness or sickness, been abandoned or neglected, and who, *from whatever cause*, cannot maintain himself, is to be fed (not sparingly but) *abundantly* from the store." Page 108.

\* Mr. Mathison says in a Note, page 102, that he "always speaks in general terms," which admit of exceptions, and are not pointed at individuals; that plantations already well managed cannot be said to expose their Proprietors to the alternative of *residence* or *ruin*, and that the certain test of bad management is the *depopulation* of estates;—a test surely of which no prudent man would wait the issue.

Readers who never were in the W. Indies, may think Mr. M's language occasionally too strong. Had I thought it too strong, for a general description, I would not have given it a place. But it is not so strong as that of Mr. Steele, and far less so than that of another of my W. Indian correspondents, which I omit; nor shall I insert the more severe remarks of Mr. Long, of one of Dean Nickolls's Barbadoes friends, Capt. Smith of the Navy, Gov. Orde of Dominica, and many others. See Long, vol. 1. p. 439; and vol. 2. p. 406; Nickolls, p. 36, ed. 4; P. C. Rep. pp. 425, 465.—W. D.

Mr. M.

Mr. M. adds :—" It is necessary to state distinctly, that for the purpose of digging cane-holes, **JOBBING** is positively forbidden. The **PLOUGH** must be continued to be used, according to the present established method. On this point the **OVERSEER** is allowed no discretion." Page 115. See p. 291 above.

Our judicious author's concluding words are : " The practice of *pushing* an estate is nothing more or less than a convertible term for the practice of *wasting the capital*, for the sake of *increasing the annual profits* of it ;—a practice founded on the narrowest views, and which, if long persisted in, must inevitably terminate in ruin." Page 117. See p. 171 above.

14. *Extract of a Letter from Isaac Du Bois, Esq. to John Clarkson, Esq. dated St. Croix, 29 June 1813.*—Mr. Du Bois is the respectable Planter who favoured the Editor with a letter in Feb. last (1813) of which an extract is inserted p. 302 above.

" The ship arrived on the 10th instant. On the 11th the horses (Suffolk) were landed all safe, and in excellent condition ; except a little eruption about the legs, occasioned by heat and confinement. After they had been on shore two days, Gentle (a Suffolk ploughman) bled and physicked them ; and on the 21st having previously given them proper exercise, he began to plough ; that is, he began to teach the Negroes who are to be his ploughmen, how to use the instrument. I, of course, attended them, and was highly gratified at observing him break up the ground, although excessively hard, from the long continuance of dry weather, with great neatness and facility. But, as soon as he placed it in the hands of the untutored Negroes, all the objections to the use of the plough in this country, were evident enough. The horses were worried and abused. The furrows, if they could be called such, were crooked, and the ground not half ploughed ; and consequently, little or no benefit could be gained from ploughing in this way ; and really, if I had not had a person like Gentle to teach the Negroes, I should have felt quite disheartened ; and, notwithstanding the expence I had incurred, I should, at least, have declined using the Plough until I could meet with such a person. But having provided Mr. Gentle with Negroes naturally sensible, and ambitious of instruction  
and

and improvement, and having, at the commencement, promised a reward of sixteen dollars to each of them, on receiving Mr. Gentle's report, that he or they could plough a piece of ground without his directions, with a further temptation of sixteen dollars per annum, as wages to each, you cannot imagine the effect which this excitement has produced; and, with great satisfaction, I hear from Mr. Gentle, that all of them (three in number) will be entitled to their rewards very shortly."

As in the case of Sir James Johnstone's experiments with the plough, I wished to say little about those of Mr. Du Bois, till their results should appear in the additional quantity of sugar produced. But the foregoing extract, whatever may be the ultimate results, seems to call for immediate publication; for it shows the propriety, if not the necessity, of sending out, as Sir J. Johnstone did, a ploughman from this country, to instruct the Negroes in the use of his implement. Ploughing, like all other arts, requires instruction and practice; and if, as General Matthew alleges, "proper implements and intelligent labourers" were wanting to the trials of the plough, it is no wonder that they failed, and that their failure produced a reluctance to repeat them. The expence of providing a proper ploughman from this country, would not be considerable; or, if it were, might be defrayed by the joint contributions of several planters; and the man, after instructing their Negroes, might proceed to instruct others. These, in their turn, might instruct more; and thus a single ploughman might diffuse his art throughout a whole colony.—It appears that the expence of English horses, which certainly is considerable, may be avoided by using the plantation oxen, which Mr. Ashley, Sir James Johnstone, and M. Condamine, found to stand the labour as well as horses, or better; and Mr. Ashley adds that mules would stand it better than either. See pp. 292, 469, and 477, above.

The following extract, which might have accompanied that from Gov. Winthorp's memoir, p. 320 foregoing, shows the superiority of the plough to the hoe in raising Indian corn.—W. D.

15. From page 24, of *A brief Account of the Proceedings of the Committee*, appointed in the year 1795, by the  
Yearly

**Yearly Meeting of Friends of Pennsylvania, &c.** For promoting the Improvement and gradual Civilization of the Indian Natives. Philadelphia printed: London reprinted, 1806.

“The preceding spring (1801) the Indians \* first began to use a plough; and the men performed the labour, with a little instruction and assistance from Friends. They took a very cautious method of determining whether it was likely to be an advantageous change for them or not. Several parts of a very large field were ploughed; and the intermediate spaces prepared by their women with the hoe, according to ancient custom. It was all planted with corn; and the parts ploughed, besides the great saving of labour, produced much the heaviest crop: the stalks being more than a foot higher, and proportionably stouter than those on the hoed ground. The corn was now [in the ninth month, or Sept. 1801] ripe and gathering in; and as their stock of cattle was much increased, instead of letting the stalks and leaves perish on the ground, as heretofore, they preserved them for winter fodder. Several of them had mown grass, and made small stacks of hay.” Page 24.

\* \* Some farther hints on the West Indian cultivation, and particularly on the use of the plough, may be seen in the Privy Council’s Report, pp. 225, 422, and in the Supplement to the same, pp. 11, 31, 32; Essay on the present state of the British Empire, p. 279; Turnbull’s Letters to a young Planter, p. 3; Wimpffen, p. 167.

In the above abridged extracts, the reader will observe some differences of opinion, which he will not expect the editor to reconcile. But they are not greater than what are to be found in books on agriculture, in this country. Such differences may generally be traced to verbal misunderstandings. Thus two farmers bred in distant counties, would be apt to give the name of *stiff* to soils of very different degrees of tenacity, and to recommend accordingly very different modes of treatment. Hence perhaps might arise a controversy which would never have existed, had they previously settled the exact meaning of the word *stiff*, as applied to land.—W. D.

\* It is not clear whether the Oneidas or the Senecas are here meant; for both are mentioned in the context.—W.D.

*The Use of the PLOUGH, &c.*Secondly, *in the EAST INDIES.*

16. *From the Privy Council's Report*, part iii. page 472.  
 Mr. Botham, *on the Mode of cultivating a Sugar Plantation at Batavia, &c.*

It may be desirable to know that sugar, better and cheaper than in our islands, is produced in the E. Indies by free labourers. China, Bengal, and Malabar produce quantities of sugar and spirits; but the most considerable estates are near Batavia. The proprietor is generally a rich Dutchman, who builds on it substantial works. He rents the estate (of 300 or more acres) to a Chinese who superintends it, and re-lets it to free-men, in parcels of 50 or 60 acres, which they plant, at so much per pecul (133½ lb.) of the sugar produced. The superintendant collects people to take off the crop. One set, with their carts and buffaloes, cut the canes, carry them to the mill, and grind them; a second set boils the sugar; and a third set clays and baskets it for the market; all at so much per pecul.

Thus the renter knows what every pecul will cost him. He has no unnecessary expence; for, when the crop is over, the task-men go home; and for seven months in the year, the cane-planters only remain, preparing the next crop. By dividing the labour, it is cheaper and better done. At Batavia, they make only clayed sugars, equal to the best W. Indian, at 18 shillings ster. per pecul [13s. 6d. per 100lb.] The shabander exacts a dollar per pecul, on all sugar exported. Common labour is at 9d. to 10d. ster. per day. But the task-men gain more from extra work, and from being considered artists in their several branches. The molasses and skimmings are sent to Batavia, where one distillery may buy the produce of 100 estates. Here is a vast saving, in making spirits; not as in the W. Indies, a distillery for each estate. Arrack is sold at Batavia at about 8 pence per gallon; the proof is about 5-10ths.

After spending two years in the West Indies, I returned to the East, in 1776; and conducted Sugar-works at Bencoolen\*, on similar principles with the Dutch.

\* Marsden, in his Hist. of Sumatra, as quoted at p. 25 of *An Outline of a Plan for the cultivation &c. of the Brit. W. Indies*, highly commends Mr. Botham's management of the Sugar-works at Bencoolen, by free labourers; and says that the expences, "*particularly of the Slaves*," frustrated many former

The cane is cultivated to perfection at Batavia. The hoe, almost the sole implement in the West Indies, is there scarcely used. The lands are well ploughed by one buffalo, with a light plough. A drill is then made with the plough, and a person with two baskets, filled with cane-plants, suspended to a stick across his shoulders, drops into the drill, plants alternately from each basket, and covers them up with his feet. Young canes are often ploughed as a weeding, and the hoe is used to weed round the plant when very young; but of this there is little need, if the land has been well ploughed. When the cane is ready to earth up, the spaces are ploughed deep, the cane tops are tied up, and a sort of shovel, with teeth, a spade handle, and two cords tied to the body of the shovel, ending in a wooden handle for a purchase, is used by two persons to earth up the cane. The strongest presses the shovel into the ploughed earth, while the other on the opposite side of the plant, by a jerk of the cord, draws up the earth to the plant. Thus two persons will earth up more canes in a day, than *ten* negroes with hoes. The canes in India are much higher earthed than in the West Indies. In moist soils, they easily earth them as high as the knee, at once making a drain and a dry bed for the cane.

At Batavia, the improvement in making sugar, keeps pace with the culture. Evaporation being in proportion to the surface, their boilers have as much of it as possible. The cane-juice being tempered and boiled to a syrup, is thrown into vats holding one boiling, and sprinkled with water to subside its foul parts. After standing six hours, it is let off by three pegs of different heights, into a copper with one fire. It is there tempered again, and reduced to sugar, by a gentle fire. It granulates, and the boiler dipping a wand into it strikes it on the side, and dropping the sugar remaining into a cup of water, scrapes it up with his thumb nail, and can judge to a nicety of the sugar's being properly boiled. The vats are all at the left end of a set of coppers. After running off for boiling all that is clear, the rest is strained on the outside of the boiling-house. What is fine is put into the copper for sugar, and the lees reserved for distilling.

Claying of Sugar, is as in the West Indies.

former attempts of the English to cultivate the sugar-cane profitably at that place.—W. D.

The

The cane-trash is not, as in our islands, put into sheds, where it loses its strength ; but is laid out immediately to dry, made up into faggots\*, set up in cocks, and used immediately when dry. Thus its force in the fire is much greater, and the carrying of it to and from the trash-house is saved.

The culture of the cane in the W. Indies, is in its infancy. Many alterations are to be made, expences and human labour lessened. The hoe, now used to turn up soils of different textures, is of one construction, cheap and light ; so that, without any help from its weight, "*the Negro digs up the earth, and the cane roots on replanting, by the severest exertion.*" In the East, we plough up the cane roots.

Having experienced the difference of labourers for profit, and labourers from force, I can assert that the savings by the former, are very considerable.

The W. India planter, for his own interest, should give *more labour to beast and less to man*. A larger portion of his estate ought to be in pasture. When practicable, canes should be carried to the mill and cane-tops and grass to the stock, in waggons ; the custom of making a hard-worked negro get a bundle of grass twice a day, abolished ; and, in short, the "*miserable management*" in our islands totally changed. By this means, following as near as possible the E. Indian mode, and consolidating the distilleries, I do suppose "*our Sugar islands might be better worked than they now are, by two-thirds, or indeed one half of the present force.*" Let it be considered how much labour is lost by overseeing the forced labourer ; which is saved when he works for his own profit.—I have stated, with the strictest veracity, the plain matter of fact,—that sugar estates can be worked cheaper by Free persons than Slaves.

Whether the Slave-trade can be abolished, and the Blacks freed, is for the consideration of Parliament. In my judgment, these desirable purposes may be effected, without materially injuring the W. India planter. He has but to improve his culture, and lessen human labour, and the progeny of the present Blacks will answer every purpose of working W. Indian estates.

\* Is not the mill-trash, in our islands, after passing twice between the rollers, often too short to be bound up into faggots ; at least when the canes are too ripe, or have been exposed to drought ?—W. D.



17. From column 4, of a printed *Letter to the Hon. Directors of the E. India Company*, dated Calcutta, 29 Jan. 1793, by Mr. William Fitzmaurice.

“The husbandman of this country will not overplant himself; for the same field produces the cane, the rice, the barley, the wheat, the hemp, and, I may say, the men who cultivate and protect it. In short, the ease and facility with which the husbandman carries on his cultivation is, to a reflecting mind, truly pleasing. A pair of bullocks and one man in a day, are able to turn up, with a very simple plough, as much ground as fifteen or twenty Negroes could do, in the W<sup>est</sup> Indies, by manual labour; the whole country being either a brick mould, or inclining to it, and which is probably the most productive Sugar soil in the universe.”

But, by Mr. F’s account, the manufacture of Sugar in Bengal, is in a very rude and imperfect state.—Mr. F. had been nearly sixteen years in Jamaica, ten of them as an overseer. See p. 470 above.

## No. XIX. NOTE on Page 318.

“*A plantain-walk, with occasional cleaning and dung, will bear for 15 or 20 years.*”] The plantain is an excellent “bread-kind,” but not to be relied on; the trees being liable to be blown down by the high winds which occur almost every year; especially about the equinoxes. But this does not hinder some planters, on account of the trifling labour attending a plantain-walk, from depending more than they ought, on that very uncertain resource. Barring the risk just mentioned, a piece of good land will yield more human food in plantains than in most other articles; but not nearly so much as has been sometimes alleged. A late author says that an *arpent* (21 of which make 22 English acres) in plantains, will maintain 50 people. But Col. Martin\* mentions it as an extraordinary assertion of a Barbadoes planter “that he fed constantly at least 300 Negroes from 12 acres of plantains;” or about 26 Negroes from each arpent;—fed, however, as field Slaves generally are, more like heathen philosophers, or Bedouin Arabs, than

\* Essay on Plantership, p. 5.

hard-working people. This assertion too, involves the supposition that the walk never suffered by the wind; which is so very improbable, as to put the assertion itself out of the bounds of credibility. Yet plantains are admitted to thrive as well in Barbadoes as in any country whatever. If one might hazard an opinion from memory alone, I should say, that an arpent of land in plantains will maintain only 17 people; allowing each a bunch weekly, and supposing the trees to be planted 10 feet asunder, and, that the wind allows each root, or stool, to yield constantly, on an average, two bunches annually. The variety called the horse-plantain is about twice as large as the common sort; but, being coarse in texture and harsh in taste, is seldom cultivated. I never saw a whole walk of it. Probably Mr. Long means the horse-plantain, when he says (vol. 3. p. 783) that "three dozen are allowed sufficient for one man for a week, in lieu of other bread;" for certainly a hard-wrought Slave, with little else than salt, or at most a scrap of salted fish, *ought* to have at least twice as many common plantains.

The French writers frequently, or generally, call the plantain and the banana by the common name of *Banane*; and hence their English translators \* seldom discriminate the two species, though in themselves marked by several striking specific differences; of which we shall only notice those that interest a hungry Negro; their weight and utility as "bread-kind." A bunch of plantains weighs more than two bunches of bananas. I never saw, or heard of the unripe banana being used as bread, like the plantain; and, notwithstanding what Mr. Long, where last quoted, would seem to insinuate, I do not think that it *can* be made a substitute for bread. The few which are raised, are always allowed to ripen as fruit. The Linnæan name of the plantain is, I think, *Musa paradisica*; and that of the banana, *Musa sapientum*.

Many planters, especially in Jamaica, depend more on plantains than prudence will justify. Whether the bread-fruit tree stands the high winds any better, I do not know. But Mr. Mathison "considers it as the most valuable vegetable production in the island, inasmuch as it is not affected by dry

\* See, for example, the English translation of Raynal, vol. iv. p. 171, 186. 286, and of Wimpffen, p. 105.

weather. Yet, strange to tell, it is no where cultivated but as an ornamental tree, or a fruit-tree of secondary importance.\*" But the munificence of His Majesty, and the exertions of Sir Joseph Banks in introducing it, at a great expence, from the South-sea islands, about 18 years ago, are not the less entitled to the grateful thanks both of planters and abolitionists.

The early planters of Barbadoes appear, from what Ligon says p. 29, to have depended much on cassada. Their successors, however, show their good sense, in raising but little of that dangerous root. Certainly it is not fit to be trusted to such hasty cooks as tired and hungry Negroes; its juice being a deadly poison. They talk indeed of a kind which is quite innocent. But the safe way is not to meddle with it. There is a sufficient variety of other things;—such a variety that the planters may blame themselves *alone*, if, with ordinary weather, they are ever at a loss to supply their Slaves with *abundance* of hearty and agreeable food.

## No. XX. NOTE on Page 521.

Governor Winthorp condescends "to describe the homely dishes of the Indians and poor English colonists," &c.] I have already inserted His Excellency's account of the culture of Indian corn with the plough, in New England; from the Philos. Transact. No. 142, or vol. 2. p. 632 of Lowthorp's Abridgment. But, as the early volumes of the Transactions are scarce, and the old Abridgment of them has no proper index, I here insert, from the paper just mentioned, some methods of preparing that corn, which appear to be very important; and which, I am pretty sure, will be as new to most of my W. Indian readers, as they are to myself. It may be thought that ship-masters from New England, might long ago have communicated those methods to their friends in the sugar islands. But those men are not distinguished for general or even local information, beyond the narrow circle of their own concerns; and it is certain that Ligon, who published his History of Barbadoes above 20 years after the date of the paper we refer to, affirms that bread *cannot* be made of Indian corn, with-

\* Notices respecting Jamaica, p. 32.

out a mixture of cassada meal. Even a writer so recent and well informed as Mr. Long, says (vol. 3. p. 764) that wheaten flour is a necessary ingredient in Indian corn bread. A friend of mine tried several times to make bread of Indian meal alone; but never produced any thing nearly so good as an oat-cake. This last is also superior to cassada bread, which Mr. Ligon, Dr. Coke and Dr. Robertson justly call insipid; and it is alleged that persons who eat much of it, are generally puny and potbellied. It is curious indeed, that, in countries abounding, as the W. Indies do, with excellent vegetable productions, a root so dangerous as cassada, unless cautiously prepared, should ever have been made an article of diet; as it was by the original natives; as well as the present inhabitants.

“The Indian corn in the ear, says Gov. Winthorp, being full, but yet green, it hath a very sweet taste. This the Indians boil, and then dry, and put up for use; boiling it again, whole or grossly beaten; and eat it by itself, or amongst their fish, venison, &c. accounting it a principal dish.

“These green and sweet ears, the Indians sometimes roast before the fire, or in the embers; by which means they have a sufficient supply of food, though their old store be done.” [In the W. Indies, corn, thus roasted, is eaten with dried salt-fish, chiefly in the evenings. It is then called *mutton*, and every body likes it.]

“The English, of the ripe corn ground, make very good bread. If mixed into stiff paste, it will not be so good, as if made only a little stiffer than for puddings, and baked in a very hot oven, standing therein all day, or all night. On first pouring it on the oven floor, it spreads abroad. They pour a second layer, or heap, on every first, and thereby make so many loaves, which, if baked enough, will be of a deep yellowish colour, if otherwise, white. It is also sometimes mixed with half, or a third of rye or wheat meal, and, with leaven or yeast, made into very good bread.

“Before they had mills, having first watered and husked the corn, and then beaten it in wooden mortars, the coarser part sifted from the meal, and separated from the loose hulls by the wind, they boiled to a thick batter; to which, being cold, they added so much of the fine meal as would stiffen it into paste, whereof they made very good bread.

“ The best food which the English make of this corn, is that they call *Samp*. Having first watered it about half an hour, and then beaten it in a mortar, or ground it in a hand or other mill, into the bigness of rice, they sift the flour, and winnow the hulls from it; then they boil it gently till tender, and with milk, or butter and sugar, make of it a very pleasant and wholesome dish. This was the most useful diet of the first planters, in these parts (New England) as well in fevers as in health; and was often prescribed by the learned Dr. Wilson, to his patients in London.

“ The English have also found out a way to make very good beer of this grain; that is, either of bread made hereof, or else by malting it. The way of making beer of Indian corn bread is, by breaking it into great lumps about as big as a man’s fist, to be mashed [mixed with water for brewing] and so proceeded with as malt, and the impregnated liquor as wort, either adding or omitting hops as desired.”

The method of malting the Indian corn is described by the author, at great length. It is, in brief, to spread it in a garden in a thin layer, cover it up slightly, and let it sprout a finger-length or more. It may then be taken up in large flakes held together by the intangled roots, washed, dried in the sun, or on a kiln, and finally treated like barley-malt. “ The beer made of it (says the author) will be wholesome, pleasant, and of a good brown colour. Yet beer made of the bread, as aforesaid, is as well coloured, as wholesome and pleasant, and more durable. This, therefore, is most in use.”

## No. XXI. NOTE on Pages 357, 358.

“ *Mr. Burke’s proposal for a sort of enfranchisement of Mulattoes and Negroes—is liable to very weighty objections.*”] The proposal here meant, was published in the year 1761, in the well written Account of the European Settlements in America, in two vols. 8vo. generally \* ascribed to the late Right Hon. Edmund Burke.

The author begins the 11th chap. of his 6th part, by observing that “ the Negroes in our colonies endure a

\* Generally, not universally. See Monthly Review, May 1806, p. 18.

Slavery more complete, and attended with far worse circumstances, than what any people in their condition suffer, in any other part of the world ; or have suffered, in any other period of time.—The prodigious waste which we experience in this unhappy part of our species, is a full and melancholy evidence of this truth,”—evidence, we may add, as applicable to the present times, as it was to the year 1761 ; and incomparably more copious, authentic, and precise.

In the next chapter, the proposal in question is offered in these words : “ What if, in our colonies, we should go so far, as to find out some medium between liberty and absolute Slavery ; in which we might place all Mulattoes, after a certain limited servitude to the owner of the mother ; and such Blacks who being born in the islands, their masters, for their good services, should think proper, in some degree, to enfranchise ? These might have land allotted them, or, where that could not be spared, some sort of fixed employment ; from either of which they should be obliged to pay a certain moderate rent to the public. Whatever they should acquire above this, to be the reward of their industry. The necessity of paying the rent would keep them from idleness ; and when men are once set to work through necessity, they will not stop there ; but they will gradually strive for conveniencies, and some even for superfluities. All this will add to the demand for our goods, and the colony will be strengthened by the addition of so many men, who will have *an interest of their own to fight for.*”

As this proposal appears very plain and equitable, and is, no doubt, in some degree practicable, it has been adopted, without examination, by persons of ability and influence, who, like its able and eloquent author, did not know, or, knowing, did not sufficiently consider all the circumstances of the case.

“ In mentioning,” says the Right Hon. Henry Dundas, late Lord Melville, “ the *Abolition of hereditary Slavery, in the islands*, I do not mean that the son of an African Slave should get his freedom by the death of the parent ; but that, being born free, he should be educated at the expence of the person importing his parents, and when arrived at such a degree of strength as may qualify him to labour, he may work for five or ten years, or what-

ever period it may be, for the payment of the expence of education and maintenance \*."

But it is easy to prove that liberty, after a certain period of servitude, would be a precarious, and even a dangerous gift to a Slave. It abundantly appears from the evidence, that the planters too generally, though, as has been proved, most erroneously "think it cheaper to buy Slaves than to breed them †."—" *Des Maitres avides n'aiment pas à voir leurs Nègresses enceintes ‡.*" But we need not heap up authorities to prove that a preference of buying to breeding existed; for this destructive notion was the first principle of those mistaken planters who so long opposed the Abolition; and still "grumble under ground" against that most salutary measure.

If, then, there are planters who cannot be prevailed on, —no not by such wholesale destruction of life and property as we noticed at p. 324 above,—to rear infants to be their Slaves for life, how can they be expected to rear them in order to make them free? Or, is it to be believed that a precarious, reversionary interest in the future labours of infants, will secure that good treatment which is not always produced by a present interest in effective labourers? It is well known, that one grand cause of the general ill usage of indented European servants, in America, is that their Masters have no interest in them or their labours, beyond the limited period of their servitude §.

But the deplorable lot of those called "Life Negroes" in the W. Indies, comes yet more decisively home to the present question. A planter, acting on the received maxims of the Slave-system, has no motive to be very anxious for the preservation of a set of Negroes whom he is to hold, for example, only during the life of an infirm spouse; herself perhaps disagreeable to him, and her relations hateful. He, of course, works them well while he has them; or, as Mr. Mathison observes of overseers, "he squeezes out of them every possible degree of labour," even to the last effort of

\* The R. Hon. Sec. Dundas, in Debate on Abolition, 2d Apr. 1792, p. 97.

† See Abst. Evid. before H. of Commons, chap. 15.

‡ See the quotation at large from D'Auberteuil, p. 249 above.

§ See Esquemeling, once an indented servant, as quoted by Long, vol. 2. p. 268. Their indentures being assignable, he says that the planters traded in them, like cattle at a fair, worked them like horses, abused and even murdered those innocent white people, with impunity. See also Abridg. Plant. Laws, art. *Servant*; and the Advertisements in the present American prints.

sinking nature. Accordingly, as I have elsewhere observed, the condition of "Life-Negroes" is universally considered as the *very worst* in which Slaves can be placed. It is true, that "Tenants for life or dower, wilfully destroying or disabling such Negroes, are to pay *treble* their value to the parties in reversion\*." But alas! Negroes may be worn down, or harassed to death a thousand ways, without immediately destroying or disabling them; and, when they are so destroyed or disabled,—*the fact remains to be proved!*

Such is the miserable condition of Life Negroes; and such would be the dangerous condition of Slaves to be freed at a certain age.

*The possessor's interest in preserving them beyond that age, would be DESTROYED!*

I have, elsewhere, exploded the pardonable, because imposing and natural error, That the Owner's interest affords sufficient protection to the Slave. *That* interest is, on the contrary, *fatal* to him, when coupled, as it too often is, with the above vulgar error which never can be enough exposed, That it is cheaper to buy than to breed,—to "get a pennyworth out of a Slave" in a few years, than to work him moderately during the period he is likely to be fit for labour†. But freedom at a certain age, would operate not as a mere vulgar error which it is possible to correct, but as a permanent and powerful motive, which would set the Owner's interest in direct opposition to his humanity. In very many instances, this would indeed make the Slave "*free from his Master.*" For he would be "*driven,*" long before his natural time, to that place where "*the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary be at rest.*"

\* This law was enacted in Barbadoes, in the year 1709; being the 18th clause of No. 117, Hall's edition. The clause at large may be seen in the P. C. Report, p. 595. It was adopted in Grenada in 1770; but appears to have no place in the boasted protecting law passed there in 1783;—"by the planters themselves, against themselves, and to be executed by themselves." See Abridg. Evid. No. 3, p. 122. A lady, however, was fined £500 Grenada curr., or about £500 sterl. for cruelty to her Negro, "*very soon after*" that law was enacted. See Extracts from the Rev. Dr. Coke's Journals, p. 174.

† Some do not even scruple to avow that this is their ruling maxim. A planter named by the witness, told him that "four years' labour of a Slave was enough for him. He had then had his pennyworth out of him, and he did not care what became of him afterwards." Abst. of Evid. p. 123, Edin. edit. The reader may add this to the similar facts stated, p. 454 above. See also Abridg. Evid. No. 4, p. 82.

Yet,



Yet, after all, weak and equivocal as it is, the Owner's interest in his Slave is the best, and, as things now stand, the *only* antidote against the *deadly* poison of Slavery; and, in no case whatsoever, ought it to be weakened. To strengthen the interest of Owners in preserving their Slaves was, and alas! still is, the express end and aim of the Abolition of the African Slave-trade; as far as that great measure respects the West Indies.

I took the liberty to communicate the substance of this argument to the late Lord Melville (to whom I had long been personally known) in a letter expressed in as humble and respectful terms as I could render consistent with a faithful and explicit statement of the case; but I never received any answer. Whether his Lordship paid any more attention to the Sketch of a Negro Code, addressed to him by Mr. Burke\*, I do not know; but, with all due respect to the talents and acquirements of those departed politicians, I may be permitted to observe, that their views of the West Indian Slave-system, appear to have been very slight and imperfect.

By Mr. Long† and others, who, from their local experience, should have known better, it has been proposed to free all Mulattoes at their birth, and without any stipulated servitude. But, in the present state of things, this would be making bad worse. For here we must *additionally* ask, Who is to satisfy the mother's owner for depriving him of her labour‡; and presenting him with an unwelcome Mulatto bantling, from whom he is to derive no benefit? And who is to pay for the maintenance of the child? It has been said, but without reflection, that the father is to pay all expences; and, in case of neglect, a fine to the parish into the bargain! But, this supposes an efficiency in protecting Slave-laws which hath no practical existence. We are not even told how the father is to be ascertained. The mother can give no evidence against him; and an expurgatory oath, in this case, is out of the question §. But it is quite needless to

\* See vol. 9th of the Works of the R. Hon. Edm. Burke, in 12 vols. 8vo. 1812. † Hist. of Jamaica, vol. 2 p. 333.

‡ It should rather be called domestic service, for the pampered House Females bring many more Mulattoes than the hard wrought and poorly fed Field Women or "Wenches" as they are generally called.

§ The St. Kitts law of 1784, against the mutilation of Slaves, requires the accused, or some one else for him, to take a curious, *negative* expurgatory oath. He, or some credible witness, is to swear, that he *did not* do the deed.

dwell on this proposal; for every man acquainted with the facts, and who reflects for a moment on the degraded, unprotected condition of the black mother, and the master's claim of property both in her and the child—to say nothing of the *cruel jealousy*\* of the white mistress, &c. &c.—must immediately see that this manner of manumitting Mulatto infants, would deeply injure all the parties concerned;—except the putative father, who cannot be touched by any law now existing, or likely soon to exist. I own, however, that the fines† *to be* levied, in one or more of the islands, for debauching married female Slaves, have a very formidable appearance—*on paper!*

In another view, however, the putative father would often be a great sufferer. The freedom of the offspring would be a new and a powerful motive for Black and Mulatto females (sufficiently encouraged already, even by some owners) to entrap young White men who have too much money, and too little employment. To the arts of those women, not a few promising youths, both European and West-Indian, may impute their ruin, or lasting repentance; if, indeed, the willing dupes of such arts ought not rather to blame their own folly.

It must be remembered, however, that the failings of those poor women, both Free and Slaves, are very much owing to their degraded condition, which discourages their marriage with persons of their own complexion; and even exposes some of them to the sad alternative of compliance or compulsion! In general, they behave decently in the irregular connections alluded to. They even appear ambitious of imitating, in their humble way, the virtues which they observe in many of their white female superiors,—virtues which often considerably alleviate the miseries of the Slaves. The charitable attention of the free women of colour, to sick and neglected European adventurers, in the Spanish West Indies, hath been celebrated by Don Antonio de Ulloa. Speaking of the same description of people in our own islands, Mr. Edwards‡ adds that “their tender-

\* Of the cruelty of female jealousy, I could mention a case, of the above kind, which I could not help seeing daily; but—*transat.*

† By the 9th and 10th clauses of the Grenada protecting law of 1788, a proprietor who debauches his married woman Slave, is to forfeit 165*l.* that currency, or 100*l.* sterling; a visitor 50*l.* curr. or 30*l.* 6*s.*; and a manager, book-keeper, &c. half a year's salary. But how the fact of debauching is to be proved, does not appear!

‡ Hist. of the W. Indies, vol. 2. p. 25.

ness as nurses towards the sick, their disinterested gratitude and attachment where favours are shown them, and their peaceful deportment under a *rigorous system of laws, and the influence of manners still more oppressive*,—afford great room to lament that a more enlightened and liberal policy is not adopted towards them. The enfranchisement of such [Negro and Mulatto domestics, &c.] as are enslaved, Christian instruction to the whole [of that description], and encouragement to their industry, would, in time, make them an useful and valuable class of citizens; induce them to intermarry with each other, and render their present relaxed and vicious system of life, as odious in appearance, as it is baneful to Society.”

This is, no doubt, “a consummation devoutly to be wished.” But it does not prove, nor indeed does Mr. Edwards recommend, as a step towards this consummation, that, as things now stand in *other* respects, all Mulattoes should be declared free from their birth; a proposition which has been made with more good meaning than close consideration, by some preceding writers.

No. XXII. “An Account of the SPANISH REGULATIONS for the gradual Enfranchisement of Slaves; endorsed with a Copy of Mr. Alderman Watson’s Confirmation of the said Account, dated 27th Feb. 1781.”

“As soon as a Slave is landed, his name, price, &c. are registered in a public Register, and the Master is obliged, by law, to allow him *one working day*, in every week, to himself, *beside Sundays*; so that if the Slave chooses to work for his Master, on that day, he receives the *Wages of a Freeman* for it; and whatever he gains, by his labour, on that day, is so secured to him, by law, that the Master cannot deprive him of it. This is certainly a considerable step towards the abolishing *Absolute Slavery*. As soon as the Slave is able to purchase *another working day*, the Master is obliged to sell it to him, at a proportionable price, viz. one fifth part of his original cost; and so likewise the remaining four days, at the same rate, as soon as the Slave is able to redeem them; after which, *he is absolutely free*. This is such an encouragement to industry, that even the most

most indolent are tempted to exert themselves. Men who have thus worked out their freedom, are inured to the labour of the country; and are certainly the most useful subjects that a colony can acquire."

Garlick Hill, 27 Feb. 1781.

"DEAR SIR,

"I most perfectly remember the conversation which passed between you and me, many years ago, respecting the state of Slavery in our American colonies; and find you have (on the other side) accurately stated the information I then gave you, of the wise regulations established at the Havannah. I cannot say I knew them to be established by law, because I never perused the Ord'nances; but when at the Havannah, many years since, it was generally so understood; and I have frequently heard West India gentlemen speaking of those regulations, as of what was very notorious. But, seeing you wish for more perfect information, I will endeavour to obtain it, by writing to Spain. In the interim, you may be sure, I most ardently wish success to your endeavours, as they tend to promote the happiness of *a race of men made completely miserable by perpetual Slavery*. I am, dear Sir,

Your faithful humble Servant,

Granville Sharp, Esq.

BROOK WATSON.

A similar account is given in the P. C. Rep. p. 867, where the Spaniards are said to treat their Slaves with great humanity; especially the domestics, whom they instruct in reading, writing, and the catholic religion. It is added that, though Cuba contains not above 50,000 Field Slaves, there are nearly 20,000 Free People of Colour in the Havannah alone. It is objected, however, that these regulations are apt to tempt Slaves to use dishonest means, to obtain the price of their freedom. This may be true. But ought there to be no liberty or property, or other good thing in the world, because unlawful arts may be practised to obtain them?

There are, however, more solid objections to this Spanish plan, in our Sugar Islands, *unless the Plough should be previously introduced*. At the date of the above information, Cuba was not a *Sugar* island.

1. Without the plough, a day in the week could not be spared on sugar plantations; or, if it could, the Slave must employ

employ it to support himself; as the owner would assuredly withhold his pittance of food; which too many already do, especially in Jamaica. See Mathison, p. 31, 92, 97.

2. This plan, without the plough, would put an end to the cultivation of the sugar cane; for no *free* man, I am sure, would ever submit to the oppression of the hoe and the basket, as now used in the heavy labour necessary for raising that article.

3. In Barbadoes and the Leeward Islands, there would be no employment, or spare land (as in Cuba) by which the Slaves could either earn the price of their liberty, or support themselves, when they should obtain it. The boasted advantages of raising small stock and vegetables are chiefly confined to the head men, and their wives. The mass of the Field Slaves have little stock or spare vegetables, and less time to look after them. Nor, if they had, would the profits on such articles maintain them, in most of the islands; even if the Slaves enjoyed a monopoly of them, and the upper and middling classes of Whites (who alone can *pay* for pigs and poultry) were to eat nothing else. In the Ceded Islands, however, and still more in Jamaica, land might, no doubt, be spared for more people than ever would be freed by this plan, were it adopted to morrow.

The foregoing seem to be valid objections against the application of the Spanish plan to the Field Slaves on Sugar plantations. Some of the domestics, however, and more of the mechanics and jobbing labourers about the towns, are, no doubt, in a condition to be benefited by such a plan.—The following objections apply to all the Slaves indiscriminately.

4. *Quoad* the Negro race, there is no efficient, impartial magistracy in our islands. *All* the Magistrates are themselves Slave owners; so that what is a Defendant's case to-day, may be his Honour's or his Worship's to-morrow. This grand objection would no doubt, be as good against Mr. Steele's plan of Mitigation, as the Spanish plan of Emancipation, if the former should be introduced *in vitis dominis*. But it may be hoped that (if possible) no plan will ever be so introduced; and that Mr. Steele's has merit enough to recommend it to considerate planters, who may themselves superintend its introduction, and become, in ordinary cases, the Magistrates on their own estates. But, above all,

5. There

5. There is no system of instruction in our islands, such as, *mutatis mutandis*, the Spanish plan supposes. Liberty, like the other gifts of God, can be usefully communicated only *ad modum recipientis*: according to the measure of the receiver. "I have yet many things," said the voice of Divine Wisdom, "to say unto you; but *ye cannot bear them now*." Who would be free, says even the republican Milton, "must first be wise and good;" and the majority of our Slaves are neither the one nor the other, in a degree to justify their immediate, or very rapid emancipation. They must be gradually prepared for the mighty elevation from the most debasing, brutifying condition ever tolerated in provinces calling themselves civilized\*, to a state of freedom in the English, or even in the European sense of the word. Slavery, says a Society for its Abolition †, in a country where it has always been *comparatively* mild—"Slavery is such an atrocious debasement of human nature, that its very extirpation, if not performed with solicitous care, may sometimes open a source of serious evils. The unhappy man, who has long been treated as a brute animal, too frequently sinks beneath the common standard of the human species. The galling chains that bind his body, do also fetter his intellectual faculties, and impair the social affections of his heart. Accustomed to move like a mere machine, by the will of a master, reflection is suspended; he has not the power of choice; and reason and conscience have but little influence over his conduct: because he is chiefly governed by the passion of fear. He is poor and friendless,—perhaps worn out by extreme labour, age, and disease. Under such circumstances, freedom may often prove a misfortune to himself, and prejudicial to society."

Nothing indeed but such a profound ignorance of the real condition of the Slaves, as cannot for a moment be suspected of their leading friends in this country, could induce men in their senses to seek the immediate emancipa-

\* "How can a country be said to be *civilized*, in which *domestic Slavery* still exists?"—Coxe's *Travels into Poland*, &c., vol. 3. p. 174. But I have been assured by a respectable Scotch merchant, who had lived six years in the W. Indies, had been settled eleven years in Dantzic, and travelled much in Poland, that the condition of the W. Indian Slaves is incomparably worse than that of the Polish serfs; particularly in the grand article of diet.

† "An Address to the Public, from the Pennsylvania Society for promoting the Abolition of Slavery, and the Relief of Free Negroes, unlawfully held in Bondage.—B. Franklin, president. Philadelphia, 9th Nov. 1789."

tion of Beings to whom, it is very generally allowed, that a legal attachment to the soil (the great grievance of the Russian and Polish vassals) would be a precious privilege. No: the W. Indian Slaves do not want immediate liberty. But, in addition to the *privilege* of being made *adscriptitii*, they want legal protection against ~~the~~ violence of White under-servants, and of all white men not their Owners or Managers, and, for their limbs and lives, against *all* men whatsoever. They want a sufficiency of the humblest and cheapest necessities of life, by the medium of wages, or land, or both. And they want the help of labouring cattle to relieve them all (especially the women) from the horse-drudgery of sugar cultivation; with which they have been all along most grievously oppressed. These *indispensable* articles the Slaves undoubtedly do want. But, I repeat it, they do not want liberty;—except as the result of measures which might best be grounded on the ancient, humanizing, villenage laws of England, as explained, applied and (as far as an individual could) exemplified and reduced to practice by Mr. Steele,—measures calculated to make liberty a blessing to the Slaves themselves, to the White colonists, and to the Empire at large. Then indeed might all parties look back to those preparatory measures, as we now look back to the villenage laws, the cradle of our liberties, and say of them what Pope Pius II. said of the celibacy of the clergy, and King James I. of all ecclesiastical observances not authorized by Scripture; *Bono olim jure sancta; MELIORE nunc in antiquata*: of old, they were, with good reason, sanctioned; now they are, with *better* reason, antiquated. *Vide Turretini Nubes Testium*, p. 35.

If the critics should find fault with my thrusting these two last important articles into a corner of the Appendix, I would remind them that Mitigation is my subject, and not Emancipation. I would add, that, having long ago received a copy of the Spanish Regulations from our great Patriarch; the late lamented GRANVILLE SHARE, indorsed, in his own hand, with the words prefixed as it's title, I could not refuse it a place. The remarks I have added may tend to *lay* the old bugbear of Emancipation, which this work affords so many pretexts for calling from “the vasty deep” of certain *poetical* imaginations, ever apt to “body forth the forms of things unknown.”

No. XXIII. Extracts from the Letters of W. D.'s West Indian Correspondents, with Remarks; inserted here to make room for adding, to the Introduction, some hints about the Free People of Colour, which were unexpectedly called for.

"History," says an elderly gentleman who was born and had, for most of his life, resided in Barbadoes, except during the period of his education,—“History has been my favourite study for almost fifty years; but, familiar as such a course of reading may be supposed to have made me with human depravity, yet its utmost point of depression, that ‘*blackness of darkness*,’ into which the soul of man may plunge itself, remained to be pointed out to me by some of the books on your side of the question. But I am compelled to acknowledge, that, however enormous, they are but too well proved; and, by reasoning from what I know to what they tell me, I can easily trace the whole series of that wickedness which, beyond every other species of wickedness, debases our nature, and outrages our religion.

“Clarkson’s Impolicy of the Slave-trade is, I think, the best publication on the subject, so far as it is a national concern. How I revere his active philanthropy! The zeal which could animate him to so laborious an investigation, must have been equally steady as ardent, rational as pious.—His full reward cannot be had in this world.

“Of Mr. Ramsay, the principal merit with me is, his being the *first* champion who entered the lists; which, as I well know what giants and goblins he attacked, is no ordinary praise.”—In a PS. the respectable writer adds: “By Mr. Ramsay’s giants and goblins, I mean those who, by threats, or any other means, endeavoured to frighten him from his duty, &c.

“I pass by others, though every one of them merits attention, to come to your Letters on Slavery. I shall not go about to analyse your book; but declare, as my decided opinion, that it is the very best thing on the subject, so far as it goes; that is, so far as it describes Slavery as now existing in Barbadoes, or as its reasonings apply to Slavery in general. The moderation which pervades your whole work, is highly laudable; since, far from aggravating the features



features of the monster, you have depicted him in colours as little offensive as truth will admit. This struck my friend Mr. [now Sir Francis] Ford so forcibly, that he asked a gentleman who was railing at you, What he could find in your book to be angry at; and joined with me in opinion, that it ought to be considered rather as an apology for, than an invective against the inhabitants in general; so far as truth may be connected with apology or invective. Mr. Ford is the greatest land-holder and Slave-holder in Barbadoes: he possesses 1100 Slaves, and yet he told me that, if he was in Parliament, he thought he should vote for the Abolition of the Slave-trade; that he was resolved never to buy a New Negro;—and it is admitted by a great majority among us, that the Abolition would be highly favourable to the interests of Barbadoes.”

This gentleman's brief mention of Mr. Ramsay's book, and his high praise of mine, were, no doubt, intended to encourage me in the laborious and arduous Abolition duties in which, he had been told, I was then engaged. The book he mentions certainly cost me great labour and anxiety. But I never had the vanity to compare it with Mr. Ramsay's masterly “*Essay on the Treatment and Conversion of African Slaves, in the British Sugar Colonies.*” When the respectable writer calls that essay the *first*, he means that no eye-witness before Mr. Ramsay had entered into any detail on the West Indian Slavery, which was likely to be really useful, either to Planter, or Slave. Others had indeed previously sketched “the monster,” in glowing colours, but so hastily and confusedly, that no “feature, joint or limb” could be seen distinctly, or seen to any practical good purpose. But the meritorious Ramsay, after studying the subject *itself*, for fourteen years, in the *West Indies*, (see his Pref.) gave to the world, in 1784, a softened \* delineation of the incessant labour, insufficient food, capricious and disproportionate punishments, and the other sufferings of the Slaves. His excellent work, with the controversy which it excited, and which he courageously and ably supported till his lamented death (which was hastened by his fatigues in his noble cause) *first* drew the attention of the Nation, and of Parliament, to this great subject:—I mean to Slavery as really practised in the West Indies; for

\* See the Rev. Mr. Stuart's Evid. No. 4, p. 100, Abr. Ev. before H. of Comm.  
that

that ornament to his country and to human nature, the late Granville Sharp, had long before procured the memorable declaration of the Court of King's Bench, in the case of the Negro Somerset, that Slavery neither has nor can have any existence in England\*.

What is said, in the above extract, about moderation and apology, may require a few words of explanation. It was my duty and my aim to be moderate; but I was under no temptation to err in that particular, or to debase myself into an Apologist for the vile Slave-system of Barbadoes. In endeavouring to show a British example to the (formerly) contemptible militia of that island, in the hour of imminent danger, and universal alarm, *I lost my right hand* †; and neither there nor here, did I ever receive so much as *thanks*! though I tried every honest and honourable method to obtain *justice*; and, but for my Abolition heterodoxy, with a reasonable prospect of success. Such usage is not calculated to make a man partial to any country. But, when dared, as I was by an Apologist for Negro Slavery, to declare my sentiments on this great national question, it was fit that my feelings should not be allowed to bias my judgment.

From carefully collating all the hints on the West Indian Slavery, which I could find in books, and in advertise-

\* This decision took place in the year 1772; and, in Jan. 1778, a similar one was made by the Court of Session in Scotland, in the case of Joseph Knight, an African Negro, against his master, John Wedderburn, Esq. a gentleman of fortune, who, I have been told, only wished to ascertain the law of his native country respecting Slavery. Their Lordships "*find that the state of Slavery is not recognized by the Laws of Scotland, and is inconsistent with the principles thereof; and find that the regulations of Jamaica*" [whence Mr. Wedderburn had brought Knight] "*concerning Slaves, do not extend to this Kingdom; and repel the defender's claim to perpetual service.*" This decision, says Mr. Boswell, vol. 2. p. 600, of his Life of Dr. Johnson, who took a warm part in favour of the Negro; and dictated to his biographer a most impressive argument on the case. See Additions prefixed to vol. 1. p. xiv.—"This decision should be remembered, with high respect, to the credit of Scotland; for it went upon a much broader ground than the case of Somerset, which was decided in England; being truly the general question, *Whether a perpetual obligation of service to one master, in ANY mode, should be sanctioned by the law of a free country.*" "Mr. Maclaurin [late Lord Dreghorn, son of the celebrated Mathematician] had the praise of Johnson for his argument in favour of the Negro; and Mr. Maconochie [now Lord Meadowbank] distinguished himself, on the same side, by his ingenuity and extraordinary research."

† On Aug. 2d 1779, a few weeks after the reduction of Grenada, by one of the three formidable French armaments which, in the American war, were intended to attack Barbadoes; but were prevented, by the trade-winds, from reaching that commanding windward station.

ments in the newspapers of the islands, I concluded that the Slavery of Barbadoes was not so bad,—in some particulars, not nearly so bad,—as that of most of the other islands. I put this discovery into print, and saw it afterwards abundantly confirmed by evidence \*. 'This is all the apology I ever made, or intended.

It seemed but fair too, that disagreeable details, affecting a great part of a community, should be accompanied with such circumstances as could be fairly mentioned to its credit. I accordingly endeavoured to do justice to the hospitality, and other good qualities of the W. Indian character, and to explode some prevailing mistakes respecting it; particularly that groundless vulgar error that the White natives of the W. Indies are more cruel Slave owners than Europeans. But even bad owners of Negro Slaves, whether Europeans or W. Indians, are not necessarily bad to persons of the *legal* complexion. The misfortune is, that the words good and bad are applied to white people and black in different senses; so that, when Mr. Steele asks (p. 17 above) "How many per cent. of good men &c." he probably means men who are as good to black people as to white †. But this impartial goodness never did prevail, and *never will* prevail, while the Blacks continue to be Slaves to the Whites. In ancient times, the Slave was of the same complexion with his Master; and, if freed, he, or his posterity merged into the free community, and all the marks of servitude disappeared. But in the W. Indies, the complexion of the Slave is a real distinction which will always work strongly on popular prejudice; and even on those who make, as well as those who administer the laws. Hitherto, at least, both prejudices and laws (at least in vulgar intendment) presume that every black man is, or ought to be, a Slave.—I am sorry that, by inserting these last remarks sooner, I did not avoid this digression.

Another respectable West Indian writes to me thus:—

"The serious truths which you have related \* \* \* \*

\* \* \* \* \*

\* \* \* Gratitude, and not *Vengeance*, ought to animate

\* See Abst. Evid. before H. of Comm. pp. 58, 107, Edin. ed. also, p. 436 above, and Gaistord, p. 97.—The Barbadoes planters and merchants have, I believe, been the first public Body, in the W. Indies, "to admit the Abolition of the Slave trade to be a measure founded on the general principles of humanity, and therefore not to be shaken by considerations of less importance." See their sensible and moderate Resolutions, at their Meeting in Mason-hall, Bridge town, 20 Aug. 1811, as inserted in the Times, 4 Jan. 1812.

† Rev. Mr. Stuart, in P. C. Rep. p. 464, and Abr. Evid. No. 4. p. 100.

their hearts for thus kindly pointing out the monstrous beam that filled their eyes. If they are ungrateful, I am not; but heartily thank you, and several other writers, for your humane and spirited endeavours to abolish the African trade. As a Creole, I had imbibed many strong prejudices in favour of Slavery, which were totally removed by the perusal of Clarkson's Essay" [On the Slavery and Commerce, &c.] "and I now wonder at my former stupidity and inhumanity in thinking *Slavery* to be lawful.—The *Slave-trade* is the most abominable trade that men professing the Christian religion ever condescended to follow; and I am sure that the utter Abolition of such a horrid commerce, would be the most important blessing ever conferred by Providence, on the inhabitants of the West Indies. There is not the smallest necessity for any fresh importations of African Negroes. The present stock of Slaves, *with moderate labour and proper diet*, might be increased, in 30 years, by common population, to a number sufficiently large to supply the demand of every island."

An honest, plain man, after sending me, as some others did, an angry epistle, *before* he read my Letters on Slavery, repented of his precipitation, and wrote me, among other things, what follows:—"The Planters [Managers] seem to throw their cruelty upon the Owners of estates. For why? "If there is an active young man, say they, that will whip and oppress the Slaves, and really make them do more in one day, than they ought to do in a day and a half, he is a clever fellow, and deserves preferment, and is preferred; when a humane young man must live under those tyrants, and *D . . . ls upon earth*, at the rate of 15*l*.<sup>\*</sup> per year." This I know to be a fact, and I tell them so.—"But crops must be made, or change the managers. I am now on an estate where I have seen eighty holers in one gang, and chiefly young people; but now they cannot make above fifteen or sixteen in their first gang; and all this is owing to cruelty; and you was witness to some of it †, when you first came here, I remember"—"A good man,

\* This 15*l* Barbadoes or Jamaica currency, is equal to 10*l*. 14*s*. 3*d* sterling, besides bed and board, such as they are. From the redundancy of white people in Barbadoes, their wages and salaries of all kinds, are lower than in some of the other islands.

† This decrease must have taken place in about 25 years. I am not sure to what estate the writer alludes; as, on most of the estates in his neighbourhood, both of residents and absentees the Slaves were badly treated.

and a humane man had the management of those estates, when I lived at ———. He was removed, for his tenderness to the Slaves &c.\*

I have retrenched a few severe expressions from the first of these extracts, and should have wholly omitted this last, were there any good grounds to believe that such things *cannot* now happen. But, considering that, for a very long period, Barbadoes has had very little dependance on the African Slave-trade, I really know of nothing to prevent such horrible destruction of human life from occurring again; especially when produce brings a high price, and pressing demands are to be paid off! The causes still exist; and the Slaves will feel the effects, notwithstanding the 'increasing liberality of the age,' and the other fine topics, about which eloquent *theorists* love to descant.

There is no room for any more extracts from the communications of *West Indian Abolitionists*; who have it infinitely more in their power to be serviceable to the Slaves than their friends in this country; but, being also infinitely more exposed to the "Vengeance" of the BIGOTS to the vulgar system, are entitled to peculiar gratitude, and to more support than *individuals* can give. One gentleman says he had been abused, from the bare suspicion of corresponding with so wicked a fellow as myself!

Circumstances precluding any particularity of acknowledgement to my West Indian friends, I can only express my deep sense of the honour they have done me, by confiding to me their names and their intelligence; and my thanks for their hints of personal danger, even under the *efficient* protection of the laws of my native country! I think myself also much obliged to those respectable West Indians who, without writing to me, generously defended me and my performance, against a fretful swarm of *talking* critics who "*found no answer, and yet condemned JOB.*"

*Annon quidam Coloni, crudeliter avari, immemores 'TURBINIS SÆVI VARIARUM CLADUM,'—immemores HISPANIOLÆ atrocis \* et vastatæ? Annon possibile, ut minimè dicam, Israelitis Nigris, in Ægypto Britannico gementibus, DEOque ULTORI certè caris, 'Mosem† oriturum'?*

\* See the quotation from D'Auberteuil, in Introd. p. xii.

† See Dean Nickolls's *poem English*, in *Abridg. Evid.* No. 3. p. 129.

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*Winthrop*, (Gov. of N. England) his humility, and good example, 321. Describes the planting and raising of Indian corn by the plough, 520; and the making of it into good bread, 507.

*Wyand's* Description of a Famine in Jamaica, 312.

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quoted in the foregoing sheets, as are scarce, or, for brevity, are referred to merely by the surnames of their authors.

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*Abridgement* of the Plantation Laws, 8vo. London, 1704.

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*Anderson's* Observations on Slavery, 4to. Manchester, 1789.

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*Caribbeana*: Letters, Essays &c. by several hands in the W. Indies, 2 vols. 4to. London, 1741.

*Clarkson's* Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species, 2d ed. 8vo. London, 1788.

*Clarkson's* Essay on the Impolicy of the Slave-trade, 4th ed. 8vo. London, 1789.

*Collins's* Practical Rules for the Management and Medical Treatment

of Negro Slaves &c. 8vo. 2d ed. London, 1811, anonymous; but known, since the author's death, to have been written by Mr. (sometimes called Dr.) Collins, who formerly published an Apology for Negro Slavery, under the title of *Considerations on Emancipation* &c. But, in the present very valuable work, he points out many gross errors and abuses, in the treatment of the Slaves.

*Douglas*, Will. M.D. Summary historical and political of the first planting, &c. of the British Settlers in N. America, 2 vols. 8vo. Boston printed, London re-printed, 1755.

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*Fiere's* Short History of Barbadoes, 8vo. London, 1768.

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*Hall's* edition of the Laws of Barbadoes, folio, printed, London, 1764, by authority of the legislature of the island, in an act passed 1762.

*Hickeringill's* Jamaica viewed, 2d ed. 12mo. London, 1661.

*Jamaica*,



- Jamaica*, History of, in thirteen Letters, anon. 8vo. London, 1740.
- Jamaica*, Inquiry into the Trade of, Jamaica printed, anon. London reprinted, 1750. See *Long*.
- Ligon's* History of Barbadoes, folio, London, 1657. Dedication dated 1653. He left the island in 1650.
- Long's* History of Jamaica, 3 vols 4to. London, 1774, anonymous; but universally quoted as Mr. Long's work.
- Martin's* Essay on Plantership, 5th ed. London, 1773.
- Mathison's* Notices respecting Jamaica, 8vo. London, 1811.
- Moreton's* Manners and Customs, in the W. India Islands, 8vo. London, 1790.
- Nickolls's* Letter on the Abolition, 4th ed. 12mo. London, 1788.
- Petty's* Political Arithmetic, 8vo. London, 1690.
- Pinckard*, George, M.D. Notes on the W. Indies, 3 vols 8vo. London, 1806.
- Poyen's* History of Barbadoes, 4to. London, 1808.
- Privy Council's Report*, or "Report of the Lords of the Committee of Council for Trade, to His Majesty, concerning the Trade to Africa, and particularly the Trade in Slaves, &c." folio, Feb. 1789. N.B. This Report is not paged; but, if the pages are inserted, with a pen, they will be found to amount to 892, including the title and both sides of the folded accounts.
- Privy Council's Report*, Supplement to, being "Papers received since the date of the Report &c. ordered to be printed, 24 June 1789," folio. This is paged.
- Ram a's* Essay on the Treatment and Conversation of African Slaves, 8vo. London, 1784.
- Ramsay's* Objections to the Abolition of the slave trade, with Answers, 2d ed. 8vo. London, 1788.
- Report* from the Committee on the Commercial State of the W. Indies, folio, ordered to be printed, July 1807.
- Saint Juvant*, Des Colonies modernes, sous la Zone Torride. 8vo. Paris, 1802.
- Smart's* Titles of Annuities &c. 1<sup>to</sup>. London, 1726.
- Smeathman's* Paper on the African *Termes* in Philos. Trans. Vol. 71.
- Smeathman's* Manuscript *penes me*, See p. 454 above.
- Stephens's* New Reasons for abolishing the Slave trade, 8vo. London, 1807.
- Trapham*, Tho. M.D. Discourse of the State of Health, in Jamaica, 8vo. London, 1679.
- Tyson's* Friendly Advice to Gentlemen Planters, &c. 12mo. London, 1684.
- Wimpffen*, F.A.S. Baron de, Voyage to St. Domingo, in 1788, 1789 and 1790, translated from the original manuscript, which was never published, by J. Wright, 8vo. London, 1791.

## A GLOSSARY

### OF WORDS PECULIAR TO THE WEST INDIES, OR TAKEN IN PECULIAR SENSES.

*Attorney* means not only an Attorney at law, but an absent planter's principal Agent, who acts for him, by power of Attorney; and hence, no doubt, the name.

*Band*, a stock, or neck-cloth.

*Birdieque*, (Qn. *Borke à queue?* Head to Heel) a pig dressed in the In-

dian way, by wrapping it up in leaves, and roasting it under a heap of embers. This word is also applied to the low stage on which the sugar is started out of the pots.

*Book poster*, an accountant.

*Breading*. Yams, roasting eddoes, sweet potatoes, and half ripe plantains,

- tains, also a very thick hasty pudding called coccoo, made of Indian or Guinea corn meal, are all termed Breading or Bread-kind; and excellent substitutes for bread they are.
- Ceded Islands.* Dominica, St. Vincent's, Grenada and Tobago are so called, because they were ceded to G. Britain, at the peace of 1763.
- Coccoo*, a very thick hasty pudding, made of the meal of Indian, or Guinea corn, and used instead of bread. In pronouncing the word, which I never saw in print, both syllables are short.
- Croole*, in this country, is often applied exclusively to mulattoes. But it really means a *W. Indian* of very complexion. It is even applied to animals bred in the *W. Indies*; as a croole horse &c. The word is originally Spanish. The *W. Indian* white people do not much like to be called crooles.
- Drogher*, a large freight boat.
- Foreigners*, and *Outlandish men*; words applied by the white vulgar in Barbadoes, not only to Frenchmen &c. but to the English, Scotch and Irish.
- Grain and Provisions*, such as are produced in the islands, and not imported.
- Handed*. A plantation with sufficient Slaves, is said to be well or fully handed. If the Slaves are too few, it is said to be weakly or under-handed.
- Horse-meat*. Grass, corn-blades, cane-tops, &c. are so called.
- Leeward* means Westward, as the trade-wind blows towards that quarter. See *Windward*.
- Leeward islands.* Antigua, St. Kitt's, Montserrat, Nevis, and the Virgin islands are so called, because to leeward of Barbadoes, to the Governor of which they were formerly subject. But, with respect to Jamaica, they are Windward islands, and are so called there.
- Lumber* means deal boards, scantlings, shingles, staves and heading, &c.
- Moses*, a strong boat, without a keel, used to land passengers and goods, in the surf.
- Mutton*; not only the flesh of sheep and goats, but half ripe Indian corn roasted in the embers, is called mutton.
- Nor'ard* is often used for North American; as Nor'ardmen [vessels] horses, beef, pork &c.
- Owner*. I have written Owner and Slave, rather than Master and Slave: Master being the correlative to Servant, in this country. I avoid the term *Slave-holder* because it is not very agreeable to some of the Planters. See Long, vol. i. p. 267.
- Place*. The possessions of the Towns-people, or small freeholders, in Barbadoes, are called Places, to distinguish them from the large sugar plantations.
- Plant*. "To make a plant," means to plant canes; a phrase used by some *W. Indian* writers.
- Rottoms*. Sugar canes which spring from the roots of the preceding crop, without replanting, are called Rottoms in most of our islands, except Barbadoes where they are called second-crop, or third crop canes. The word seems to be a corruption of the French *regelon*, and is used both as a noun and a verb.
- Season*. This word is not confined to the two great divisions of the *W. Indian* year, the wet and the dry; but a copious rain, though it fall in a day, is called a good season.
- Seasoning*. The accommodation of an European constitution to a tropical climate, is properly enough called a seasoning. But the African, being bred in the same climate, it is not easy to discover the proper meaning of the word seasoning when applied, as it also generally is, to them. To talk of their being seasoned to the disease which they contract on ship board, would be absurd. To me, the seasoning of the Africans, has always appeared to signify, tacitly, their getting over the heart-breaking transition to a state so new and distressing to them as the *W. Indian* Slavery.
- Shote*, a pig about three months old. I never saw the word in print, except in Ligon's Hist. of Barbadoes, p. 54, where it is spelled *Shot*. But, in pronouncing it, the *o* is long.
- Store*, means the warehouse, or even the

the shop of an importer of European goods.

**Ten-acre-men** of Barbadoes, so called from the early practice of granting ten acres of land to those white indentured servants who had fulfilled the period of their servitude; or rather, had survived its hardships. By various subdivisions and junctions, those lots now contain from one or two acres up to twenty or thirty; and the proprietors of "Places," containing eight or ten acres, or more, with Slaves in proportion, form a middle class between the Sugar planters and the Poor Whites. They are, on the whole, a respectable yeomanry, in point of property, and even in point of information (especially about law-

business) allowing for their strange notions about Slavery. See *Place*.

**Town-agents** receive on shore imported plantation stores; often supply the planters with foreign articles, especially provisions; take charge of the produce, till shipped &c.

**Tradesman**, in the W. Indies, as in Scotland, means a mechanic.

**Trash**. Field trash, called in some of the islands *Wowra*, the leaves and tops of the sugar-canes cut off in reaping. Mill-trash, the canes after the juice has been squeezed out by the mill; and used as fuel for the boiling-house and still-house.

**Vendue**. (Fr.) an Auction of goods.

**Windward**, Eastward, as the trade-wind blows from that quarter.

**Windward islands**. See *Leeward islands*.

Some readers may be inclined to think the W. Indian acceptance of a few of the above words, as proper as the present English. For example; Is not *Store* as good a word for a depository for goods as *Warehouse*? and *Band* even a better word, for a neck-cloth, than the anomalous term *Stock*? *Band* is the Scotch, and probably was the old English term; as "Wale out the whiter o' my bobbit *Bands*." GENTLE SHEPHERD. — Mr. Long has given a *Glossary of the Sea-terms* current on shore, in the W. Indies.

#### ERRATA.

Page.	Line from top.	Line from bot.	For	Read
v	Introd.	1	in the Index	after the Index
vii	—	17	For immediate Emancipation	For the immediate Eman- cipation of the Slaves
xii	17	—	Or he might have thought	Or rather he appears (p. 136 below) to have thought
70	3	—	that, at Archbishop's table,	at Archbishop's table, that
171	6	—	32 <i>l</i> . 18 <i>s</i> . 7 <i>d</i> . ster <i>l</i> .	32 <i>l</i> . 8 <i>s</i> . 7 <i>d</i> . ster <i>l</i> .
188	—	14	without aid	without the aid
198	4	—	unless they get	unless they could constant- ly get
241	15	—	Salves	Slaves
246	—	2	even	event
249	8	—	<i>leur</i>	<i>leurs</i>
284	13	—	<i>dung-cree</i>	<i>dung-creels</i>
293	—	4	an iron plough	a plough
301	7	—	the fact is so	the fact is such
322	15	—	appears	appear
399	—	15	bette	better
447	—	1	same	some
459	—	7	11 and 12	12 and 13





